CHRIST'S COMING KINGDOM.

THE LORD'S REIGN ON EARTH.

HENRY VARLEY

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CHRIST'S COMING KINGDOM

OR

THE LORD'S REIGN ON EARTH

BY

HENRY VARLEY

"And the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Lord, and His name one."—ZECH. xiv, 9.

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever."—REV. xi, 15.

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UNTO HIM

WHOM GOD HATH HIGHLY EXALTED,

AND GIVEN A NAME WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME,

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,

THE SAVIOUR,

WHO, REJECTED BY THE WORLD, WAS ACCEPTED BY GOD;

WHO DIED FOR OUR SINS,

HAS RISEN, AND IS AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE MAJESTY ON HIGH,

UNTIL THE MORNING DAWNS

WHEN HE SHALL COME AGAIN AND TAKE HIS GREAT POWER, AND REIGN

UNTO HIM

THIS LOWLY TRIBUTE OF REVERENCE, WORSHIP, AND

EXPECTANT LOVE,

IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED.

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INTRODUCTION.

INTIMATE knowledge of the Scriptures must result in an intelligent hold upon what is properly known as dispensational truth. Rightly to allocate the testimonies, prophecies, and promises of God in regard to His time, purposes and objects, is proof of ability rightly to divide the word of truth. To thousands of believers, the Word of God is simply a mass of precious material thrown together without order, plan, or purpose.

They view the Scriptures very much as men might look upon the substance of which a magnificent house is to be built, but they see little connection between the parts, and possess skill neither to tell out the plan, nor to erect the superstructure. They are what the Apostle describes as novices, and stand in marked contrast to those who, through careful study of the Word of God, are spoken of as "wise master-builders."

Through want of intimate acquaintance with the great lines of prophetic truth which stand for their guidance, large numbers of Christians are "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive."

Prophecy rightly understood is a most important safeguard against false views concerning the future, and

means the plan of the divine purpose graciously disclosed by God to his people, in order to their instruction, defence, and establishment in the faith. Fulfilled prophecy, known and carefully distinguished, is a sheet-anchor to the soul in these days of sceptical unrest and doubt. It is a brilliant light shining out from the past, clear and bright.

Unfulfilled prophecy also, is a light projected into the future. By the knowledge which it imparts we know practically where we are. We are confident as to that which shall be, and are preserved alike, on the one hand, from undue haste, and from false statements concerning the future of the world on the other. The prophetic testimonies of God's Word are invaluable as the guide to the Church of God, and for this conclusive reason: neither jot nor tittle has failed in the past, or shall fail in the future.

It was this certainty of confidence which led Peter to say that beyond his personal eye-witness on the holy mount of Christ's Coming Kingdom and glory: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy whereunto we do well to take heed in our hearts, as unto a light which shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise."

The prophetic land-marks in the Word of God cover the whole period of human history as definitely and plainly as the great railway-lines dissect the heart of the country in which we dwell.

On this solid vantage ground we take our stand, in order to develop and arrange revealed truth concerning the Lord's Second Coming. "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not at any time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 PETER i, 19-21).

Many teachers in our day utterly ignore these great facts. They speak and write as though prophecy was the

disclosure of the fancies of men, rather than the revelation of the purposes of God. No man has the right, though he may possess the ability, to wrest the Scriptures so as to produce a shew in favour of his theory. Individual idiosyncracies, by which we mean man's mental peculiarities, are sure to clash with divine truth. The storehouse of thought is not found in the unrenewed mind of man, but it is found in His infallible Word. The prolific sphere for the conception and emanation of vain and untrue thought is the human mind, whenever it acts apart from subjection to the divine will and word.

In regard to the subject of the Lord's pre-Millennial Advent, men are constantly asking of the plainest testimonies of the Word of God: "Cannot these passages be made to mean something else? And are you sure that the words teach what they seem to import?" Into this loose and corrupt habit of mind multitudes have drifted, until the Scriptures are made to mean anything or nothing.

Nor this only; the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the purpose of the Gospel during the course of this age, the perfecting of the Body of Christ, the breaking off of Israel, the times of the Gentiles, the election of God in regard to Israel, the Coming Kingdom of Christ on earth, the first, as distinguished from the final resurrection —these diverse and weighty factors in the economy of God are either ignored or mixed up in the most hopeless confusion.

Now, if men will not take pains to discriminate, if they will not apply themselves in order to intelligent acquaintance with God's plan and purpose, they are sure to drift from the course of the Holy One of Israel. There never was a time in the history of man when the words needed greater emphasis: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. iv, 8, 9).

The solemn truth of the Lord's second, pre-Millennial, and personal appearing in power and great glory carries with it so much that abases man, that we need not be astonished at its limited acceptance amongst men. It cuts up, root and branch, the popular view of the world's progress; and is altogether out of touch with men's views and ideas concerning the future. It denies *in toto*, from God's point of view, the asserted improvement and upward evolution of man. The faith of God is not in man, because man is a sinner. That man, as a sinner, should have confidence in his future is not surprising, though it certainly is in direct violation of all legitimate and philosophic thought and reasoning. Men cannot understand why God (if such a being exists) should not be satisfied with the growth of big cities, vast populations, and great men. So little have they in common with the thoughts of God, that they are surprised that He should not forego His own claims in order that the praises of national greatness, of great men, and the glory of war, should be chanted to the ends of the earth. They are amazed that His sympathies do not run in the currents of cash, commerce, and huge companies. His disregard of the worship of mammon they cannot away with.

That the Lord should fail to commend their splendid covetousness, and refuse to admire their massive architecture, and palatial edifices, is conclusive to them either that His conversion should speedily take place, or that the latest modern thought should intelligently prove that He is not. That the Bible should declaim against the virtues of those estimable Governments, and men who make millions out of opium and strong drink, is conclusive of puritanic inability to recognise some of the strongest proofs of human progress.

I am far from denying that some of the dusky sons of eastern countries have been brought to Christ, and to the knowledge of the living God by English Christian influence. My position, however, is that for every heathen, which our western Christianity has saved and

blessed, at least fifty, through our social and commercial intercourse, have been blasted and slain.

If the design of the existence of these heathen nations was that they might be corrupted and cursed by the English people, the United Kingdom has scored a splendid success. If, however, the living God intended this country to be the pioneer of right, and good, and truth to the nations sitting in darkness, she has unutterably and miserably failed.

I for one distinctly refuse to be dazzled or blinded by the glamour and tinsel of this corrupt age. Our Lord described it as both "wicked and adulterous." He is right. Our experience is the proof and justification of His words. Some of us are fully prepared to be accounted fools and madmen by our fellows. The prophet made no mistake when, sketching the closing days of "the times of the Gentiles," he said, "Yea, truth faileth! and he that departeth from evil maketh a prey (is accounted mad, *marg.*); and the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment" (Isa. lix, 14-15).

The drift of the present time has three prominent tendencies. First, a feeble and sluggish religious current distinctly favouring the ecclesiastical supremacy of the *Papacy*, and a consequent ignoring of the mighty forces of truth which were identified with the Protestant Reformation. The second, a stronger current, drifting towards intellectual scepticism, the ripe fruit of which will be the avowed antichristianism of the last days. Under the attractive guise of modern Liberalism this force is rapidly gathering strength. The third, and by far the strongest, is the common selfish lawlessness which is prepared to sweep away the restraints of human and divine laws, in order to give free course to licentiousness, blasphemy, intemperance, and corrupt commercial freedom. The desire which is increasing in ever widening circles, finds its parallel in the worst days of Israel's democratic era, for is it not written there was no king in Israel! every

man did that which was right in his own eyes (JUDG. xxi, 25).

Many months have passed since I consented to write upon the great question of the Lord's Second Coming. The work has grown far beyond the original intention, but I trust I have been enabled to present a volume which will be regarded as a clear, interesting, and popular exhibition of that subject which I regard as pre-eminently "the truth for the times." To our exalted Lord I commend this imperfect but willing service. My own spirit has been strengthened as He permitted me the honour of this pleasant labour. That the people of God may be instructed and comforted in their holy faith by the perusal of the following pages, and the testimony given become the means of arousing interest in the subject which is alike the hope of the Church and the world, is my earnest prayer.

HENRY VARLEY.

CHAPTER I.

THE TWO POSITIONS DEFINED.

"The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (HAB. ii, 14).

"His name shall endure for ever; His name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in Him! all nations shall call Him blessed. Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things; and blessed be His glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen" (PSALM lxii. 17-19).

"Pilate therefore said unto Him, art thou a King then? Jesus answered, thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice" (JOHN xviii, 37).

"And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (MATT. xxvi, 63-64).

WAITING.

I am waiting for the dawning
Of the bright and blessed day;
When the darksome night of sorrow
Shall have vanished far away:
When for ever with the Saviour,
Far beyond this vale of tears,
I shall swell the song of worship
Through the everlasting years.

I am looking at the brightness,
(See, it shineth from afar,)
Of the clear and joyous beaming,
Of the "Bright and Morning Star";
Through the dark grey mist of morning
Do I see its glorious light;
Then away with every shadow
Of this sad and weary night.

I am waiting for the coming
Of the Lord who died for me:
Oh! His words have thrilled my spirit,
"I will come again for thee."
I can almost hear His footfall
On the threshold of the door,
And my heart, my heart is longing
To be His for evermore.

SELECTED.

CHAPTER I.

THE TWO POSITIONS DEFINED.

ALL true Christians believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will come again, the second time. The testimony of the word of God is, beyond all question, conclusive as to the fact itself. The Christian Church is not at issue concerning the Lord's return. The issue concerns the manner, object, and time of His appearing.

Many hold that the Scriptures teach that our Lord will not return to the earth until He comes to the final judgment. They understand His reign in a spiritual sense, and maintain that His kingdom is already established on the earth, and that its final triumph over the nations of the world is only a question of time.

They regard the statements concerning our Lord's reign on earth as having their true meaning in the fact

of the gradual spread of righteousness and truth throughout the world. They do not deny the Millennial Reign, or Age, but they regard it as an indefinite space of time during which the Gospel is to be preached, and the power of the Holy Spirit augmented, until—as it is usually expressed—"the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea." Thus (according to their view) our Lord's kingdom and reign on earth is to be understood, and henceforth "of the increase of His government there shall be no end."

Large numbers of believers, on the other hand, maintain that the Scriptures clearly teach that the personal advent of our Lord must precede the spread of righteousness and truth. They hold that the words spoken at the time of the Ascension are conclusive as to the fact of our Lord's personal return to the earth. The words, uttered by the heavenly messengers, are thus given: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." (Acts i, 10, 11). These words, spoken on the slopes of Olivet, are clear and literal, and entirely agree with the prophecy of Zechariah, who, testifying of our Lord's return to the earth with His saints, uses these words: "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem on the east." And again, "the Lord my God shall come and all the saints with Thee." (Zech. xiv, 4, 6).

They also maintain that the kingdom of Christ now exists, but that it is in "mystery," and not in manifestation. This whole dispensation, they believe, is preparatory "to the dispensation of the fulness of times" (EPHES. i, 10, 12), when our Lord, as King over the whole earth, shall personally reign in power and great glory. (PSALM xlvii, 2, 7, ISAIAH xxiv, 23, ZECH. xiv, 9, PSALM lxxii).

They hold that a careful examination of ISAIAH xi, 1-12, which contains the testimony that "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (verse 9), clearly shows that Christ's personal advent given in verses 1-4 PRECEDES the condition of blessing described in the verses which follow. The Lord's appearing, His presence, power, and wisdom secure the magnificent results which are disclosed in this remarkable prophecy of Millennial glory.

Not only is this believed to be the true exegesis of the passage in question, but it harmonises fully with the Apostle's testimony. Writing of our Lord's glorious appearing and reign, Paul says: "Which in His *own times* He shall shew who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords." (1 TIM. vi, 15, R.V.).

They believe that though all power has been given into the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ, He has not as yet, according to the divine purpose, taken that power, NEITHER is His reign yet manifested (REV. xi, 15-18). They maintain that though our Lord reigns in His al-

mighty power and sovereign grace, and in the hearts of His believing people, Satan (the god of this age) rules and reigns in the hearts and lives of the great majority of men, and that he will continue to do so until the Lord Jesus Christ APPEARS.

They hold that the Scriptures clearly teach that the present age forms the latest portion of "the times of the Gentiles," during which our Lord declared that iniquity would abound (2 TIM. iii, 1-5); that He Himself would be rejected (LUKE xvii, 24, 25); His word despised (2 THESS. i, 7, 8); and the Holy Spirit insulted (JOHN xiv, 17).

They believe that "*two mysteries*" have their place and outworking during the whole course of this evil age. *One*, the mystery of the Body of Christ (EPHES. iii), or the calling out and preparation of the heirs of God, and the joint-heirs with Christ, who during the Millennial Age will reign with Him over the whole earth as Kings and Priests unto God, (ROM. viii, 17-19, REV. xx, 6); that until "the time of the manifestation of the sons of God," which takes place when Christ appears (PHIL. iii, 20-21), the kingdom on earth will remain in "mystery," according to our Lord's prophetic teaching in MATT. xiii, 11.

The *other* outworking revealed in the Scriptures is "the mystery of iniquity," which, despite the light of God, and truth, and righteousness, has long held, and still continues to hold the nations of the earth and the great majority of men in the darkness and bondage of sin and wickedness. This bondage still

continues, according to the faithful and solemn word: "The whole world lieth in the evil one." (1. JOHN v, 19, R.V.). To the same intent also Paul writes, concerning the LATTER days: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron." (1 TIM. iv, 1, 2, R.V.). In his second letter also: "This know also that in the LAST days grievous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God: holding a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." (2 TIM. iii, 1-5). What a truthful portrait of the present condition! This is the Holy Spirit's testimony and it stands in direct opposition to the boasted moral evolutionary tendencies made concerning these days.

They affirm that experience shows that there is not a single nation, country, city, town, hamlet, or village, in any part of the world, where more than a small proportion of the inhabitants are really Christian. The fear of God is not in the heart of the great majority. The authority of the Lord Jesus Christ is scarcely recognised, much less does He reign in power and great glory.

They believe that the Scriptures clearly teach that the

maturity of this age, the world's manhood, the earth's harvest, is at hand, and that the wickedness and iniquity of the world as a whole is, and will be, so pronounced, that at its close, the Lord Jesus shall be suddenly "revealed from heaven with the angels of His might in flaming fire, taking vengeance upon them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 THESS. ii, 7, 8).

They hold that the Scriptures show that nothing but the coming of the Lord will bring to an end the discord, wickedness, and sin which everywhere prevails. They believe that the Lord Jesus Christ alone is competent to secure to the world the righteousness, peace and prosperity which are to be the characteristics of His reign and the stability of His times. Such is the position maintained by those who hold the doctrines of the Lord's pre-Millennial advent.

It will be seen that the positions taken are widely divergent, and, moreover, that both sides appeal for the support of their views to the testimony of the Word of God. This should be carefully borne in mind. Surely this great subject is not one for heated discussion, or angry debate. Mutual forbearance is necessary in order to determine the truth of this great and important theme. The intelligent study of this subject should lead to careful search into the Divine Word, even as the noble Bereans who "searched the Scriptures whether those things were so." (ACTS xvii, 11).

In common with many brethren, I decline to admit that we hold any "fanciful" theory on this subject. Our earnest desire is to know the truth, and to reject that which is false. We hold that we are bound to submit our judgments to the plainly revealed words of Christ. Those words may be difficult to understand. They need to be read in the light of the most careful comparison with and study of the context, as well as with the help of the best modern criticism;—provided always that it is the criticism of reverent faith, and not the *rationale* of modern unbelief.

There is a certainty and an imperative authority about the words of Christ which is unique. It is submission to this divine certainty and authority which has caused me firmly to hold the doctrine of the Lord's *parousia*, His personal and pre-Millennial advent. I cannot understand our Lord's teaching apart from this interpretation. The Greek word *parousia* is repeatedly used in the New Testament. It occurs twenty-four times. It certainly stands for the literal and personal coming of our Lord. Its meaning is thus defined in the lexicons: "presence," "arrival," "advent," "a coming." The following are some of the passages in which the Greek noun *parousia* is used. They show conclusively the meaning which is to be attached to the term, MATT. xxiv, 3, 27, 37, 39; 1 THESS. ii, 19; iii, 13; iv, 15; v, 23; 2 PET. iii, 4; 1 JOHN ii, 28. In all these passages the personal and literal coming of our Lord is clearly meant. To attempt to make the word "coming" in these Scriptures to be identical with our Lord's spiritual

presence, or to mean the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, or death, or the overthrow of Jerusalem and the Jewish house, is misleading and contrary to the mind of God.

Whilst I firmly maintain the principles and truths which I trust are clearly portrayed in the following pages, I have not become intolerant of the views of those who differ from what is here expressed, neither have I ceased to be an ardent worker in the fulfilment of our Lord's command, to "Go out into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (MARK xvi, 15).

I have sometimes heard it stated by brethren in the ministry: "If I held these views, my zeal in missions, and interest in the work of preaching Christ would certainly decline." With many others I affirm that in this momentous theme we have found both inspiration and an additional incentive to holy zeal and ardent energy. To illustrate the effect which this important truth produces, I quote the striking words of Dr. Horatius Bonar, whose able advocacy of our Lord's pre-Millennial advent is so well known:

Men die in darkness at thy side,
Without a hope to cheer the tomb;
Take up the torch and wave it wide,
The torch that lights time's thickest gloom.

Toil on, faint not, keep watch and pray;
Be wise the erring soul to win;
Go forth into the world's highway,
Compel the wanderer to come in.

Toil on, and in thy toil rejoice ;
For toil comes rest, for exile home ;
Soon shalt thou hear the Bridegroom's voice,
The midnight cry, "Behold I come."

Nor does it appear to me that we give our post-Millennial brethren ground for separation or estrangement. Truly we can say: "Beloved brethren, if the views which you entertain are correct, we are doing our utmost to advance the issues which we respectively desire. We stand with you shoulder to shoulder, in season, out of season, by example and the preaching of the Gospel, hastening the result which our mutual faith holds fast." More than this, show us, in any part of the earth, nations, governments, cities, or localities won for Christ by the preaching of the Gospel, and we will be among the first to admit the fact, and to rejoice in the manifestation of His kingdom and power.

At the same time, if the truth of human experience and national life throughout the world bespeaks opposition to Christ; if the prophetic words: "We will not have this man to reign over us" (LUKE xix, 14) is finding its fulfilment in the abounding iniquity which prevails, let us heed His word, lest we be deceived, and His coming overtake us "unawares." The Apostle's testimony is: "Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." (1 THESS. v, 2-3). Our Lord also, in solemn language adds: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with sur-

feiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares; for as a SNARE shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." (LUKE xxi, 34, 35).

UNTIL HE COME.

"For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do shew forth the Lord's death UNTIL HE COME" (1 COR. xi, 26).

Until He come! O joyous thought,
The Saviour will appear;
He shall fulfil our brightest hopes,
And banish all our fear.

Until He come! O blessed hope,
Jesus, we look for Thee,
We would be ever with Thee, Lord,
We would Thy glory see.

Until He come! wait, calmly wait,
The day comes on apace;
Our longing eyes shall yet behold
The glories of His face.

Until He come! With earnest gaze
We'll sweep earth's cloudy sky;
And wait with joyful confidence
The dayspring from on high.

Nor shall we long and wish in vain,
The darkness hastes away;
And faith's bright eye e'en now beholds
The dawning of the day.

Roll on, roll on, ye laggard years,
Ye days, be swift of wing;
We wait amid earth's bitter groans
The advent of our King.

SELECTED.

CHAPTER II.

OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED AND ANSWERED.

His Coming to Earth Personal and Literal.

"This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts i, 11).

"And He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, whom the heaven must receive until the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His prophets since the world began" (Acts iii, 20, 21). *(This promise was made after the Ascension and subsequent to Pentecost).*

"And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem on the east. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Lord, and His name one" (Zech. xiv, 4, 9).

"And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven saying: The kingdoms of the world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. xi, 15, R.V.).

THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR.

"Unto us a child is born" (Isa. ix 6).

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning!
Dawn on our darkness, and lend us thine aid.
Star of the East, the horizon adorning!
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

Cold on His cradle the dewdrops are shining;
Low lies His bed with the beasts of the stall;
Angels adore Him, in slumber reclining,—
Maker, and Monarch, and Saviour of all.

Say, shall we yield Him, in costly devotion,
Odours of Edom, and offerings divine—
Gems of the mountain, and pearls of the ocean,
Myrrh from the forest, and gold from the mine?

Vainly we offer each ample oblation;
Vainly with gold would His favour secure:
Richer by far is the heart's adoration;
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning!
Dawn on our darkness, and lend us thine aid.
Star of the East, the horizon adorning!
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

Bishop Heber.

CHAPTER II.

OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED AND ANSWERED.

THE pre-Millennial advent of our Lord is strongly opposed by many who maintain that such teaching involves the following grave and serious conclusions:—(1) The admission that the preaching of the Gospel of Christ has failed in the object for which it was designed. (2) That this view dishonours the Holy Spirit whose office and work gradually to effect the conversion of the world to the dominion of Christ is assumed to be the teaching of the Scriptures. (3) That this doctrine ignores the moral power and glory of the Word of God, which, it is affirmed, is adequate to overcome the moral, social, and national evils which are admitted to exist.

I confess that I have great sympathy with those who hold these opinions. There is much in the position taken by these objectors which must commend itself to

the thoughtful consideration of Christian men. That truth, as a divine and moral force, should wrestle with and finally vanquish every form of evil in the world, is in itself a noble and splendid idea. Who has not felt the power and inspiration of the poet's words?—

> "Truth crushed to earth, will rise again—
> The eternal years of God are hers—
> While error, wounded, writhes in pain,
> And dies amid his worshippers."

Nevertheless, the question remains, what saith the Lord? And what is the burden of the prophetic Scriptures concerning the moral condition which will prevail at the close of an age, whose rulers at its commencement crucified the Lord of glory?

When the Lord Jesus Christ instructed His disciples in reference to the time of His return, He said: "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man: They did eat, they drank, they married wives, and were given in marriage until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise also, as it was in the days of Lot: they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded, but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all; even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed." (LUKE xvii, 26-29).

These words cannot possibly refer to a condition in which righteousness and submission to our Lord's government prevail. They absolutely preclude the thought that the Gospel of Christ will be accepted by the great majority

of men prior to His coming again. Solemn and overwhelming judgment is here clearly predicted by Him who declared: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away." (LUKE xxi, 33).

The second coming of Christ, whenever it takes place, will find the wickedness of the world as fearful as in the days when fire from heaven suddenly destroyed the cities of the plain. An age ripe for judgment suddenly dealt with in the righteous vengeance of God is the illustration chosen by the Lord Jesus to set forth the moral characteristics of the last days of this "wicked and adulterous age." (MARK viii, 38).

Without question an age is approaching in which righteousness shall everywhere prevail. That age the apostle calls "the dispensation of the fulness of times," the intent and object of which is to sum up all things in Christ—"the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth" (EPHES. i, 10, R.V.). It is the age concerning which ISAIAH speaks: "Behold! a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment" (ch. xxxii, 1). In reference to the coming glory of this wondrous age, God hath thus spoken: "Yet have I set My king upon my holy hill of Zion (PSALM ii, 6).* "In that

* Concerning the fulness of time, an eminent servant of Christ has well said: "The time of human misrule ends by Christ's coming to reign in righteousness. The time of the testimony of His grace closes when His judgments begin. The time of the Church's suffering ends, when He comes to be glorified in His saints. The time of Israel's blindness ends by the veil being taken away at the appearing of our Lord. The time of Gentile dominion ends by the stone suddenly smiting the image. The time of creation's groaning ends when the manifestation of the sons of God takes place. The time of Satan's power, by his being bound a thousand years, when our Lord descends from heaven."

day, the Lord shall be King over all the earth, there shall be one Lord and His name one" (ZECH. xiv, 9). "I beheld till the thrones were cast down and the Ancient of Days did sit. Until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. And the kingdom, and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him" (DAN. vii, 9, 22, 27).

How forcibly also does the Apostle Peter, in his memorable address on the day of Pentecost, deal with the objectors in his powerful vindication of the coming kingdom and glory of Christ! These are his words: "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God has sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh he would raise up Christ to sit on His throne, He, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in the grave, neither did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." (ACTS ii, 29-32).

I am aware that this passage has been quoted as a proof that the promise made to David has been already fulfilled; such an inference, however, is not warranted. The Apostle's argument is given in defence of the certainty of the resurrection of our Lord. The throne here referred to

certainly is not David's, neither is it Christ's, but the throne of the Holy Father in Heaven, which our Lord shares until the time when He comes forth invested with the sovereignty of the earth. Rejected, as our Lord was, from the government of the world, the Holy Father, in expression of His infinite satisfaction with the glorious and finished work of the beloved Son, invited Him to share His throne until the times of the "regeneration" arrive, and the throne of the Lord Jesus Christ be manifested. Carefully note REV. iii, 21, and MATT. xix, 28. The distinction is between heaven and earth, between the eternal throne of Jehovah and the millennial throne of Christ the King. The oath sworn to David by God Himself could not possibly refer to heaven and His throne, but must, in the nature of the case, refer to the earth and to David's throne. David certainly is not going to occupy the throne of God; neither had the oath and promise of God any reference thereto.

In perfect accordance with this testimony stands the word of the Apostle Paul. Exhorting Timothy and all believers to hold fast the confession of their faith, he thus writes: "that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which in His times He shall shew who is the BLESSED AND ONLY POTENTATE, the King of kings and Lord of lords." (1 TIM. vi, 14-15).

The words BLESSED and ONLY are designed for comparision, and are both striking and appropriate. We recall that which history furnishes and remind our readers of what has happened during the past twenty years to the

Czars of Russia, the Emperors Napoleon and Maximillian, the Presidents of the United States, the Sultan of Turkey, the Khedive and other crowned heads. The term blessed cannot be said to belong to the experience of these earthly monarchs, but it shall attach to the coming King. Besides this, no peer or rival shall interfere with His universal sovereignty. The contrast is between the many petty earthly kings and the One Great Divine Potentate, between the corrupt and unblessed crowned heads of earth and the supreme and blessed Monarch of Heaven.

How careful the Apostle was not to confound the "god of this world," and "the course of this age" with the times and reign of our Lord Jesus Christ! Observe the future tense: "WHICH IN HIS TIMES HE SHALL SHEW"—evidently directing the minds of those to whom He wrote to the future coming of the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords. The testimonies of the divine word to the approaching universal sovereignty of Christ, stand out with magnificent prominence. The pages of inspiration are ablaze with the light of His coming glory. The appearing of the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ "shines as a brilliant star in the firmament of prophetic promise." Well might Pilate tremble and be astonished when, in answer to this inquiry: "Art thou a king, then?" Our Lord answered: "Thou sayest I am a king, TO THIS END WAS I BORN, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth." (JOHN xviii, 37).

CHAPTER III.

HUMAN AND DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY CONTRASTED.

"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity: men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken" (LUKE xxi, 25, 26).

"And then shall they see the SON OF MAN coming in a cloud, with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then, look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh" (LUKE xxi, 27, 28).

"Behold! a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment—for He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth; He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth. The Lord reigneth: let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of isles be glad thereof" (ISA. xxxii, 1; PSA. xcvi, 13; xcvii, 1).

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

"Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world" (Acts xv, 18).

God almighty! King of nations! earth Thy footstool, heaven Thy throne!
Thine the greatness, power, and glory, Thine the kingdom, Lord, alone.
Life and death are in Thy keeping, and Thy will ordaineth all:
From the armies of Thy heavens to an unseen insect's fall.

Reigning, guiding, all commanding, ruling myriad worlds of light;
Now exalting, now abasing, none can stay Thy hand of might!
Working all things by Thy power, by the counsel of Thy will,
Thou art God! Enough to know it, and to hear Thy words: "Be still!"

In Thy sovereignty rejoicing, we Thy children bow and praise,
For we know that kind and loving, just and true, are all Thy ways;
While Thy heart of sovereign mercy, and Thine arm of sovereign might,
For our great and strong salvation in Thy sovereign grace unite.

Frances Ridley Havergal.

CHAPTER III.

HUMAN AND DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY CONTRASTED.

HOW remarkable the closing sentences of the last chapter: the end for which Christ was born—"that He should be God's King," the cause for which He came into the world, "that He should reign over the whole earth." Again: "to bear witness to the truth." Witness to what truth? Truth, as God's blessed and incarnate representation? Yea, doubtless; but pre-eminently to bear witness to the truth that He it was of whom Nathaniel, speaking by the Spirit of God, said: "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel. (JOHN i, 49). If I were asked, in this time of political unrest and governmental instability, what is the world's most imperative need, I should certainly answer, "A competent and therefore divine ruler."

Sovereignty in the hands of man necessarily means governmental impotency. This is equally true of all legislative and representative assemblies; the reason for

this is obvious. Man, though decorated with a crown, and adorned by his fellow men with the symbols of authority, is nevertheless a sinner. A sovereign sinner is a contradiction in terms. How is it possible for a man, so long as he is a sinner, to rule either with judgment or in righteousness? Nothing more shameful or repulsive is known to human history and experience than the corrupt and immoral character of the great majority of the world's kings, nobles, rulers, and legislators.

From the day that God rejected Adam from the functions of sovereignty because of his disobedience, government in the hands of man has always represented conditions of instability, corruption, and failure. The spirit of compromise, the sacrifice of truth and righteousness for that which was politic, has marked the whole of man's history. Possibly nothing in human experience has been more puerile, incompetent, and feeble than the attempts which have been made by earthly monarchs and governments to rule righteously. These crowned sinners are destitute of the power which is necessary to reign in righteousness. They are destitute of personal goodness themselves, therefore they cannot produce that needed quality in their subjects.

In view of the eternal stability of unborn ages, throughout which the government of God is to be supreme and universal, it was essential that man should learn the imperative necessity which exists for "the heavens to rule." Of this vitally important truth man could only become convinced through long-continued experience. It is a singular fact that though every man is born

a sinner each one develops the self-righteousness of the Pharisee until grace renews the heart and produces true and righteous judgment.

The prophet Daniel, acting on behalf of the Most High God, thus instructs Nebuchadnezzar, the primal head of Gentile power. Interpreting the king's vision concerning the great tree which he had seen "hewn down" (chap. iv, 23) as having direct reference to the absolute and despotic monarch himself, the prophet, concerning the judgment which should speedily follow, adds these striking words: "This matter is, by the decree of the watchers and the demand by the word of the holy ones, to the intent that the living may know that the MOST HIGH ruleth in the kingdom of men" (ver. 17).

Despite the warning of Daniel we read (ver. 28). "All this came upon Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake and said: Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power and for the honour of my majesty? While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying: king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken: the kingdom is departed from thee. The same hour was the thing fulfilled, and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws. And at the end of the days, I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me; and I blessed the

Most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom from generation to generation." (v. 28-37).

Who need doubt that, in this remarkable vision and subsequent experience, the head of kingly Gentile power saw where the drift of earthly sovereignty tended, and that he himself illustrated the truth of the prophecy that man's rule and government would prove an utter failure. Is it not evident also that he recognised in the prophetic vision of the SON OF MAN, God's coming king (*see* DAN. vii, 13-14). Of this competent ruler Isaiah testifies: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called, Wonderful! Counsellor! The Mighty God! The Everlasting Father! The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end; and upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall perform this." (ISAIAH ix, 6-7).

This sublime prophecy, which has reference to the glory of Christ throughout the Millennial Age, and which was written nearly four centuries after David's death, is entirely in accord with Daniel's subsequent testimony before Belshazzar.

The prophet thus speaks: "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like unto the SON OF MAN came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him; and there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all

people, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." (DAN. vii, 13-14).

Failure marked the commencement of despotic governmental rule, as instanced in the mighty monarch of Babylon. What is the testimony of the WORD OF GOD concerning the course of human government? That testimony is endorsed by the experience of two thousand five hundred years. Indeed, we may widen the range of our view, and ask: What has been the character and quality of human rule and authority throughout the world during the past six thousand years? Is it not a fact that instability, confusion, revolutions, and wars have been, and continue to be, the MARKED characteristics which have and do pertain to personal and corporate government in all the earth? Does the close of the nineteenth century see any improvement in these respects? With preparedness to place ten millions of soldiers on the battle-field within six months, does the Continent of Europe in 1886 tell of rest and peace? In no former period of the world's history were the engines for the destruction of human life so fearful and terrible. Science has lent her aid, until the horrible weapons of war seem more like a fearful dream from another Dante's *Inferno* than an awful reality.

And yet there are those who believe that these are the times of the Government of the Prince of Peace. They hold that the world is approximating to millennial times, when national greatness, splendid civilisation, world-wide commerce, intelligence, peace, wealth, and pleasure shall

fill the earth. How important, at such a time, to hold fast the sure word of prophecy! Instead of such conditions of peace and prosperity being before us, the sudden and awful overthrow of human government and earthly sovereignty is distinctly made known in the Scriptures of truth.

Interpreting the vision of King Nebuchadnezzar, in which the latest manifestation of Gentile power is portrayed, and which has reference to the time when the judgment of our Lord shall take place, Daniel says: "Thou sawest, till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet, that were of iron and clay, and brake them in pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone (Christ) that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." (DAN. ii, 34, 35).

The solar system may be said to be the language of heaven instructing the sons of men in the great truth that Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, must become the Centre of authority and government to the ends of the earth. There cannot be settled peace or prosperity until He reigns. Theocracy in government is the correlation of the unity of the Godhead. Every believer, begotten with the word of truth, is born a Theocrat. The cry of each child of God is: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" The recognition of His lordship, submission to His will, with inquiry for His way, is the premonition of and preparation for His universal government. To this end also His people are born again.

When this result is attained: "Not I, but Christ liveth in me," the soul's vision is of the King; the end being the fulfilment of our Lord's desire: "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they also may be made perfect in one, that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me."

In the light of these thoughts how striking are the words: "that they all may be one as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." (JOHN xvii, 21-23). Our Lord here distinctly makes known that when the manifestation of His glory in connection with His Church takes place, the result will be that the world will believe. It is worthy of notice that, far from the world being converted or induced to believe by the coming of the Holy Spirit, our Lord mournfully declared: "Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him, but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you and shall be in you." (JOHN xiv, 17).

Grandly doth the prophet Ezekiel write the verdict of God concerning the time when iniquity is come to the full: "And thou, profane prince of Israel, (THE ANTI-CHRIST) whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end; thus saith the Lord God: Remove the diadem, and take off the crown. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is, and I will give it Him." (EZEK. xxi, 25, 26). But we are not left with an open question concerning the character of human government at the close of this age. We have seen that our Lord comes "in flaming fire,

with the angels of His might, taking vengeance upon them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." This testimony conclusively proves that iniquity will have reached a fearful height. Such a manifestation—"in flaming fire taking vengeance"—would be impossible if righteousness and truth prevailed amongst men.

So corrupt will earthly governments have become, that Our Lord is described as destroying them in sudden and overwhelming judgment. In PSALM ii, 9, we read: "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Certainly nothing more solemn was ever written than the words of the Apostle John concerning the actual time of the appearing of our Lord, when he says (REV. vi, 13-18): "And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind; and the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain, and every island were moved out of their places; and the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains (military tribunes) and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks: Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of His wrath is come! and who shall be able to stand?" This is the testimony of the Spirit of God concerning the supernatural intervention of heaven when the Lord Jesus Christ shall come in great glory "to put down all rule and all authority and power."

CHAPTER IV.

CONCERNING MIRACLE AND NATURAL SEQUENCE.

"Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 PET. iii, 4).

"Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" (ACTS xxvi, 8).

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by Him, as ye yourselves also know" (ACTS ii, 22).

"Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast, therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land, full of great fishes—an hundred, and fifty, and three; and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken" (JOHN xxi, 6-11).

BEHOLD I COME QUICKLY.

"At even, or midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning"
(MARK xiii, 35.)

Perchance it may be in the evening,
When the hush of the day is come,
And the fireflies light the hedgerows,
When the King of day 's gone down.
When the hours are quiet and still,
And thine heart goeth toward home—
Where thy love is, thy strength, and will—
In the evening, thy Lord may come.
It may be in the calm of midnight,
When slumber is holding sway,
And the watchman crieth loudly,
"Alls well," e'en then His voice may
Be heard. Then await him, redeemèd one,
Garments clean, lamp trimmed and shining,
The Bridegroom's cry remindeth thee
That at midnight He may come.
It may be when the cock croweth,
And night's dark hour dieth slowly,
When the day star shineth brightly,
Before the dawn of the roseate morn,
He may come. Therefore watch and be ready,
At the sound of His voice. From heaven
He cometh to greet thee ; changed, glorified,
Raptured ! at the dawn He may meet thee.
Perchance, 'twill be morning, the sun risen high,
While the waggons of business roll heavily by,
When the city's great crowd is startled,
And dumb at His voice. Then He may come.
Whilst the world buys and sells, and the race hurries on,
Wealth and pleasure the promise, rewards rarely won ;
Men eat and drink, are married, and pass on
Mid' the fashion which passeth. Then He may come.

HENRY VARLEY.

CHAPTER IV.

CONCERNING MIRACLE AND NATURAL SEQUENCE.

BEFORE we proceed to a discussion of the causes which led to the rejection of Christ by the Jewish House, and the consequent delay in the fulfilment of the purpose of God concerning our Lord's sovereignty over the whole earth, I direct the attention of my readers to an objection which is probably already working in some minds—I refer to the divine and supernatural intervention already indicated in the preceding chapter.

As this objection involves the whole question bound up in the use of the word miracle, I may with advantage at once call attention to the subject. I understand the word miracle to mean that which is supernatural and above, though not necessarily contrary to, reason. To give an example: We ask the simple question what is Life? Is it not God's miracle? Can philosophy find it? Can

science produce it? Where is the astute intellect that can even tell what life is, much less give it being?

Beside this, miracle is the correlative which pertains to the personal Creator. No wonder that the materialist has no place for the existence of God, and that the evolutionist can only maintain his theory side by side with an impaired and imperfect revelation. What possible reply could the evolutionist give to the following testimony concerning the immediate act of the Creator instanced in the following remarkable words: "And every plant of the field BEFORE it was in the earth, and every herb of the field BEFORE it grew"? The creative acts here spoken of withstand the theory of evolution to the face. Like Dagon, fallen on the threshold with his head off, evolution lies in lost case amongst these "*plants*" and "*herbs*." (GEN ii, 5). In anticipation of these days of intellectual scepticism, in which miracle is boldly denied, the Apostle Peter wrote: "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 PET., iii, 3, 4). It will be observed that their objection to the truth of the Lord's coming is described as an outcome of lust—not the lust of the flesh, but of *the mind*, the scoffer's jest, the materialist's conclusive argument.

The objection is based upon what we may call reason's view of the order of natural sequence. They appeal to the absence of anything supernatural or miraculous in ordinary experience since the fathers fell asleep, thereby casting

discredit upon the Holy Word and upon the faithful witnesses of God.

Now, this, substantially stated, is the position taken to-day by tens of thousands of educated men and women, not in England only, but throughout the world. They have given up faith in the Scriptures as the revelation of God to man, because the Word of God is full of testimony concerning things which are supernatural and miraculous.

As a system of morals, as a remarkable illustration of past literature, the Bible is accepted. As the Divine treasury of infallible truth, the Word of God is denied, disbelieved, and rejected. Miracle, by reason of disagreement with natural order, is the stumbling-stone upon which they fall. Their argument, briefly stated, is as follows: "The past thousand years have known no sudden and violent breaches in natural order, such as belief in the miracles of the Scriptures involve; we, therefore, make choice of and believe in natural sequence, and refuse to exercise an unreasoning faith in the miracles of the Old and New Testaments."

Many of these, whom I would respectfully describe as Materialists, regard our joyous confidence in the personal appearing of our Lord to reign as King over the whole earth as the delusion of childish minds. They mercifully regard us as very good sort of people, but backward in intellectual growth, children in the sense of mental incapacity and weakness, and of a corresponding want of discernment of "the great strides which truth, the world, and humanity are making." By many of these this testimony to Christ's personal coming will be regarded as puerile,

and antiquated. My strong confidence in "the blessed hope" will excite the smile of pity. Gallio-like, they care for none of these things, neither do they believe them.

How important, therefore, to bear in mind that the Holy Spirit, by His wonderful prescience and care, has both warned and armed us against these objections of philosophic scepticism, and that, in language as apposite as it is assuring. It is not too much to say that the rock upon which those who reject miracle make shipwreck becomes to the believer a sure and stable foundation in these days of widespread and subtle unbelief.

There can be no question that the second coming of Christ will be identified with wonderful breaches in natural sequence. It should be carefully noted that a series of miracles, on a scale of magnificent grandeur, will inaugurate the commencement of the reign of the Great King. We do not understand what is gained by putting off the coming and presence of the Heavenly Sovereign until the close of His reign. This surely is an anomaly in the fitness of things, whether either earthly or heavenly sovereignty be considered.

Let it be intelligently and firmly borne in mind that, at our Lord's first advent, miracle was identified with and attended the whole of His ministry. The Lord Jesus cited the facts of the lepers being cleansed, the deaf being made to hear, the lame to walk, the blind to see, and the dead being raised to life, as among the foremost proofs of His Messiahship. (MATT. xi, 4-5.) Indeed, from the Virgin's conception until the ascension of our Lord from Mount Olivet, natural sequence may be

said to have been in constantly recurring breach, and miracle Christ's attendant Minister of State.

It is also worthy of remark that the miracles of our Lord when on earth were of a character which became Him as the lowly Servant of Jehovah. Thrice only did He raise the dead. Twice only, assuming the *rôle* of the Great Creator, did He still the tempest and rebuke the boisterous waters, so that "there was a great calm." Twice only did He instantly create the bread which satisfied the hungry thousands. Twice only did the unreasoning fish assemble in multitude to His summoning will. His power over disease, over sin, over demons, over death, over the elements, over disordered minds, yea, His self-surrender unto death, all declare how miracle, as the handmaid of His hidden majesty, attended Him.

Reverently we may affirm, however, that none of these direct interferences with natural order were upon a scale of great power. He cometh again in great glory, and then this lofty anthem shall be sung: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. v, 12). Now as the supernatural endorsed and accompanied our Lord's ministry before, so the Word of God shows that miracle, upon a scale of surpassing grandeur and magnificence, will attend His coming again to be a great King over all the earth (Psalm xlvii, 2-7); for "the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Lord and His name one" (Zech. xiv, 9).

I will only add at this time a few suggestive words

concerning the marvellous breaches in natural sequence which will take place when He comes whose right it is to reign. There will be no room for the materialistic scoffer's jest then. Hearken to the words of the inspired Apostle: "For this we say unto you, by the word of the Lord . . . . that the Lord Himself shall *descend* from Heaven with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God." What a breach in natural sequence now takes place! It is the Lord breaking His present silence by the resurrection and instant change of untold millions of the Church of Christ: "And the dead in Christ shall rise first." The Lord Jesus, in majesty and great glory, calls from the tomb myriads of the sons of light. Forth they come, in instant obedience to His almighty voice, robed in the incorruptible glory, which neither thought, imagination, or human language can adequately portray or describe (1 THESS., iv, 15-17).

Then instantly follows another tremendous breach in life's present order. Every true believer in Christ living on the face of the whole earth will be instantly changed. "Behold," says the apostle, "I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump . . . for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." (1 COR. xv, 51, 52). Then, when the dead are raised incorruptible, and the living instantly changed into the likeness of the body of His glory, they will together be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Here, beyond all question, is the very majesty of miracle!

Then follow the marvellous changes which are identified at that time with the physical renovation of the earth (HAB. iii, PSA. xlvi). In the same wonderful series of events the Lord Himself stands upon the Mount of Olives (ZECH. xiv, 4, 5), which, cleaving in twain at His presence "half toward the north and half toward the south," a wide and noble river will be formed, which, opening from the Mediterranean Sea on the west, will run through the heart of Jerusalem and flow eastward to the Dead Sea, whose waters thenceforth will be healed. (ZECH. xiv, 4-11, EZEK. xlvii, 1-12).

Thus, by miracle, Jerusalem will become possessed of a magnificent river, which in the past she was destitute of. This great water-way will fit her to become the great maritime centre for which God in the future has designed her (ISA. xxxiii, 20, 21). The groaning creation also will be no longer burdened, for with the manifestation of the sons of God the mournful dirge of six thousand years of "sorrow, lamentation, and woe" give place to the glorious liberty of the earth's great year of jubilee—now begins the rest and peace, and the gladness of "the day the Lord hath made" (Ps. cxviii, 24), the antitype of the Sabbath, the thousand years of millennial glory (REV. xx, 4, 6). Then "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea, and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know Him, from the least unto the greatest" (HAB. ii, 14, HEB. viii, 11).

These stupendous actings on the part of the glorious Lord are but initial workings in the great series of miracu-

lous events which inaugurate the Millennial reign. There are many others to which I may hereafter refer. These are for the discernment and comfort of those who delight to affirm, "My heart is inditing [is bubbling up] a good matter; I speak of the things which I have made touching the King: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer" (PSALM xlv, 1).

We call to mind the glowing prophetic words which concern the coming reign of Christ: "In His days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall worship Him. His name shall endure for ever: His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed: and blessed be His glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with His glory; Amen, and Amen." (PSALM lxxii, 7, 11, 17, 20.) To apply the prophetic testimony of this millennial Psalm to Solomon, except in a very subordinate sense, is contrary to sound exposition.

We joyfully notice the addition at the end of this psalm. Seeing, as David did, that his Lord would certainly reign, and these conditions be the result of His presence, His wisdom and His power, the sweet singer of Israel adds: "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended." Yes, indeed, prayer in his thankful heart had ceased, and given place to the sacrifice of praise. Beholding the earth filled with the glory of the Lord, all nations at peace and calling Him blessed, we may ask, For what beside could he pray?

CHAPTER V.

THE FIRST APPEARING OF GOD'S KING.

THE REGAL PROMISE MADE TO DAVID.

Now therefore so shalt thou say unto My servant David, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I took thee from the sheep-cote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel: and I was with thee withersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth. Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for My name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be My son. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

DAVID'S REPLY.

And now, O Lord God, Thou art that God, and thy words be true, and Thou hast promised this goodness unto Thy servant: therefore now let it please Thee to bless the house of Thy servant, that it may continue for ever before Thee: for Thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it; and with Thy blessing let the house of Thy servant be blessed for ever.

(2 SAM. vii, 8-10; 12-14; 16; 28, 29).

THE LORD IS KING.

Tell it out among the heathen, that the Lord is King !
Tell it out, tell it out !
Tell it out among the nations, bid them shout and sing !
Tell it out, tell it out !
Tell it out with adoration, that He shall increase ;
That the mighty King of glory is the King of peace.
Tell it out with jubilation, though the waves may roar,
That He sitteth on the waterfloods, our King for evermore !
Tell it out, &c.

Tell it out among the nations that the Saviour reigns !
Tell it out, tell it out !
Tell it out among the heathen, bid them burst their chains !
Tell it out, tell it out !
Tell it out among the weeping ones that Jesus lives ;
Tell it out among the weary ones what rest He gives :
Tell it out among the sinners that He came to save ;
Tell it out among the dying that He triumphed o'er the grave.
Tell it out, &c.

Tell it out among the heathen, that Jesus reigns above !
Tell it out, tell it out !
Tell it out among the nations that His name is Love !
Tell it out, tell it out !
Tell it out among the highways, and the lanes at home ;
Let it ring across the mountain and the ocean foam ;
Like the sound of many waters let our glad shout be,
Till it echo and re-echo from the islands of the sea !
Tell it out, &c.

FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL.

CHAPTER V.

THE FIRST APPEARING OF GOD'S KING.

NO careful student of the New Testament can fail to be struck with the prominence which the Gospel of Matthew gives to our Lord as the King of the Jews. It has appropriately been called "the Gospel of the King." It is, in the highest sense, both historical and prophetic. One of the most important sections of this Gospel is that which is contained in the first twelve chapters, whose completeness and special teaching in relation to the truth of the Lord's Second Coming, and to the causes which led to the delay in the manifestation of the kingdom of Christ on earth, is remarkable. This will appear if we carefully examine and summarize the testimony therein contained.

There can be no question that the purpose of God in sending His beloved Son at His first advent, was that He should be received by the house of Israel as their Lord and King. It is on this ground that it is written: "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (JOHN i, 11).

The first chapter of Matthew opens with these words: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of

David, the son of Abraham;" and then gives the genealogy of our Lord as related to David, in whom the regal promise was originally vested (2 SAM. vii, 12, 13, 16). The second chapter commences with this remarkable testimony: "Now when Jesus was born, wise men came from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is He that is BORN King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and have come to worship Him. "Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said: Go, search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found Him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship Him also." "And lo! the star which they saw in the east went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was; and when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child, with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshipped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts—gold, and frankincense, and myrrh" (chap. ii, 9-11).

Thus did the wise men and the starry heavens alike bear testimony to the birth of God's King. Herod, also, distinctly recognized His sovereignty, and committed a fearful crime in order to compass the death of the Holy One of God (chap. ii, 16). Zechariah's prophecy (LUKE i, 68; Mary and Simeon's royal songs (LUKE i, 46; ii, 27); the angels' testimony (LUKE ii, 10), all bore witness to the fact that God's King had come.

Chapter iii. shows the great forerunner, John the

Baptist, proclaiming: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (chap. iii, 2). "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight!" (ver. 3). Mark his testimony, not only concerning "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," but his witness to the divine and royal bridegroom, "the latchet of whose shoes he was not worthy to bear." Then, at our Lord's baptism, the Holy Father is heard saying: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," and the Spirit of God rested as the dove upon the anointed and Holy One (ch. iii, 11, 12, 16, 17). The burden of the evidence in all this is, that God had sent Him of whom Nathaniel said: "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the KING OF ISRAEL (JOHN i, 49).

Chapter iv. describes the conflict waged between the god of this world (*i.e.*, during this evil age) and the Holy King. Here the subtle power of fiery temptation at the hands of the devil is borne for forty long and weary days. The protracted trial of the Second Adam, the Lord from heaven, now has place. His meetness for earth's sovereignty is challenged by the prince of this world, but righteously vindicated and maintained. The lusts of the world, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life, in vain assail the Holy King, into whose hands "God hath committed all power." Well did Satan know who Jesus Christ was. The words of the devils were: "We know Thee, who Thou art—the Holy One of God; art Thou come to torment us before our time?" (chap. viii, 29: MARK i, 24).

Knowing something of the purpose of God in relation to the sovereignty of Christ over the whole earth, there

was a profound depth of cunning in the tactics which the Evil One adopted. Brought face to face with the beauty and purity of God's Holy King, the devil discloses no movement toward repentance. There was no recall to his mind of the dignity and glory which he had once possessed when, as an unfallen creature, he, too, had had a share in the moral loveliness which belongs to submission to the divine will. The sight of that perfection of beauty in the Second Adam the Lord from heaven, roused the devil to malignant hatred. Could he but overthrow the Christ, and succeed in breaking Him away from allegiance to the Father's will, he might yet find occasion to revel in deeper depths of Satanic shame. But the imperative pangs of natural hunger had no power to move the holy spirit of Jesus from its fixed anchorage in the will of His Father. The good hand of God, which had sustained Him for forty days, could do so for fifty or for a hundred. The Father's will was His living bread. How conclusive His answer to the tempter: "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (ver. 4).

Nor did the suggested intervention of angelic ministry at such an extremity better avail the subtlety of Satan. Accustomed as our Lord had been in the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, to the willing service of Heaven's ministers of state, this time, He knew, was for Him a time of isolation, trial, self-denial and humiliation. Though loaded with indignity by the god of this age, and conscious that prayer would instantly bring twelve legions of angels, no temptation could lead Him to

manifest His divine power before the appointed moment. The devil might suggest an upholding ministry of angelic strength from the temple's summit; but another eminence would hold the vision of the Christ—the summit of Calvary, where His sorrow, shame, and death should bruise the tempter's head, and the yielding of His life become the price of the world's redemption.

Foiled, yet not beaten back, the great adversary once more in "the high mountain" sheweth God's Holy Sovereign "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, saying: All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me." But the Lord answered: "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (MATT. iv, 10). Well is it written: "Then the devil leaveth Him, and behold angels came and ministered unto Him."

Let it not be either ignorantly or thoughtlessly asserted that Satan had no sovereignty of an earthly character to offer for *a season* to the Holy Son of God. He has actual proprietorship in the earth during this time of the prevalency of iniquity. The proof of his power during this evil age is found and confirmed in the fact of the abounding wickedness which everywhere exists. The great majority of men do not need the proffer of the world as a price for their service. They are content, like Esau, to sell their birthright for "a mess of pottage," or "a morsel of meat."

Surely, none of my readers believe that when our Lord reigns as King over the whole earth sin will abound, or iniquity be prominent. What? The Lord Jesus

Christ an incompetent Sovereign? Why, it is on the ground of His divine wisdom, ability, and power, that He was sent into the world. Listen to the inspiring words of the Father, concerning His Anointed King: "But unto the Son, He saith: Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever—a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated wickedness: therefore God thy God hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows (HEB. i, 8,9).

Without question, the Lord shall reign in righteousness. In His times sin will scarcely be known. The nations of the earth shall learn war no more. Peace will be universal and enduring. Goodwill to men will everywhere prevail. Europe will no longer be the vast "armed camp," it has been since the days when the imperial world-power put to a shameful death the Lord of glory.

Mark the wonderful words with which this chapter tells of the ability and goodness of the divine Sovereign: "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness among the people, and His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought unto Him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic (epileptic, R.V.), and those that had the palsy; and He healed them. And there followed Him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan" (MATT. iv, 23-25).

CHAPTER VI.

THE KING'S GOVERNMENTAL POLICY.

ZECHARIAH'S JUBILANT SONG.

"And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David; As He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant; The oath which He sware to our father Abraham, That He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life" (LUKE i, 67-75).

ARISE AND SHINE.

Lift up, lift up thy voice with singing,
Dear land, with strength lift up thy voice!
The kingdoms of the earth are bringing
Their treasures to thy gates—rejoice!

Arise and shine in youth immortal,
Thy light is come, thy King appears!
Beyond the century's swinging portal
Breaks a new dawn—*the thousand years.*

And shall His flock with strife be riven?
Shall envious lines His Church divide,
When He, the Lord of earth and heaven,
Stands at the door to claim His bride?

Lift up thy gates! bring forth oblations!
One crowned with crowns a message brings:
His word, a sword to smite the nations;
His name—The Christ, the King of kings.

He comes! let all the earth adore Him;
The path His human nature trod
Spreads to a royal realm before Him,
The Life of life, the Word of God!

CHAPTER VI.

THE KING'S GOVERNMENTAL POLICY.

NOW follows the enunciation of the high and lofty principles which are contained in chapters v, vi, and vii of this Gospel, usually spoken of as "The Sermon on the Mount." We ask this important question: Does not the introductory sentence: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven!" as well as the beatitudes which follow, and the constantly recurring references to "the kingdom," clearly indicate that we have here presented in detailed form, by the King Himself, the fundamental principles—political, social, and moral—which (had our Lord been received) would have characterised His government and reign?

Imagine a condition in which sin is utterly unpopular, iniquity scarcely known; social, moral, and personal integrity the rule throughout the earth; righteousness and peace abounding everywhere! And for such conditions,

how exactly adapted are the principles and laws contained in this wonderful and comprehensive discourse! Here the wisdom, ability, and power of the King are gloriously combined.

Let it be borne in mind that, under the sway of the great Theocratic King, undiscovered wickedness would have been impossible. Under the corrupt dominion of the prince of this evil age—himself a deceiver and an outlaw—the hiding of facts is now as common as it is inimical to good government. There will be no secrets of iniquity when Christ reigns. All sin will at once be detected and the transgressor immediately punished. Well does the sweet singer of Israel, in prophetic testimony concerning the coming reign of Christ, given in Psalm xciv, verses 8-10, exclaim: "He that planteth the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see? He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not He correct? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not He know?"

The exalted principles uttered by the Holy King offended the perfunctory hypocrisies which were embodied in the chief priests and Scribes. The drastic words of Christ, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven," must have pierced like a two-edged sword the seared consciences of these "whited sepulchres."

To hear that under His sovereign sway righteousness was no longer to be a dishonest attempt at the admixture of light and darkness; that temporising with evil must

cease; that prayers made at street corners to be seen of men were to Him an abomination; that savourless salt was not fit even for the dunghill; that in His kingdom simplicity and godly sincerity must prevail; that under His righteous rule, unrighteous wrath would be adjudged as murder, and unholy lust counted as adultery—to have a governmental economy launched in which the vast majority of men would rather part with a right hand or foot than commit sin or be disloyal to their King—this, to those whom our Lord justly called "a generation of vipers," was a yoke intolerable indeed. Profound depths of infinite wisdom lie in this comprehensive testimony from the lips of the Great King. No wonder that, when Jesus had ended these sayings, "It came to pass the people were astonished at His doctrine, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes" (ch. vii, 28, 29).

It is most important to notice that to this day the governmental polity of Christ contained in this unique sermon is spoken of as being Utopian and utterly impracticable. Certain men, ignorant and of corrupt mind, have not hesitated to speak of our Lord's teachings as immoral, and wanting in intelligence. That the principles which will prevail when Christ's kingdom appears should be declared unsuitable during this "present sinful and adulterous age," surely is not matter for surprise. It would be passing strange that an age which, because of His principles, judged God's King to be worthy of death, should, after His murder, fall in love with and accept His laws. This would involve an anachronism

indeed, a condition for which this evil age is not, and cannot, be prepared.

Let it not be supposed that I am limiting the teachings of the "Sermon on the Mount" to the Millennial Age or to the kingly idea only; or that I am arguing against the responsibility which is ours, as the disciples of Christ, to be obedient to the revealed principles of our Holy King. I am merely placing the governmental economy of Christ, which is contained in these chapters, in its natural position as related to the rejected King—*i.e.*, in its proper and dispensational sense.

CHAPTER VII.

THE COMPETENT KING AT WORK.

CHRIST'S PARABLE CONCERNING ISRAEL.

"Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?" (MATTHEW xxi, 33-42).

"From His lips
Truth, limpid, without error, flow'd. Disease
Fled from His touch. Pain heard Him, and was not.
Despair smiled in His presence. Devils knew,
And trembled. In the Omnipotence of faith,
Unintermittent, indefectible,
Leaning upon His Father's might, He bent
All nature to His will. The tempest sank—
He whispering—into waveless calm. The bread
Given from His hands fed thousands, and to spare.
The stormy waters, as the solid rock,
Were pavement for His footstep. Death itself,
With vain reluctancies, yielded its prey
To the sterm mandate of the Prince of life."

BICKERSTETH.

CHAPTER VII.

THE COMPETENT KING AT WORK.

THE eighth chapter of Matthew's Gospel shews the competent King at work. His teaching for the time being is in abeyance. His power and readiness to heal is now made known and exercised. His ability to restore health and strength to the sons of men is poured forth as water from a living spring. The disordered conditions which have been produced by the related maladies of sin and physical and mental disease now hear and know His rebuking and restoring word.

The leper stands first (ver. 1), whose hideous and incurable blood disease fittingly heads the list. Well does he illustrate, in the horrible deformities of which the disease of leprosy is capable, the endless and shameful varieties of moral evil which exist and are developed amongst men. Mark it! The leper is immediately cleansed by the will and word of God's Holy Sovereign.

The palsied man comes next (ver. 5), type and illustration of the varied mental diseases which arise from a demoralized and disordered brain. That sickness of intellect, which is common as autumn leaves, and infirm as the experience of the epileptic, the malady of mind of which God hath written: "The whole head is sick, the whole heart faint," is instantly healed by the commanding word of God's competent King.

Then follows (ver. 14) fever—meet representative of the exciting lusts and passions to which men everywhere are not only liable, but which they are constantly taking. Fever, whose hellish virus burns up and consumes the vital forces of our common humanity. Fever—the abnormal condition of blood and brain, contracted largely through the prevalency of the disease in others and ordinary contact with them. Cruel, hateful fever, the last in the dread trinity of ills which flesh is heir to, rebuked and instantly cured. Mark it well! It is the word and action of the Great King which in every case restores.

And now the evening comes (ver. 16), and they bring to Him "many who were possessed with devils, and He cast out the spirits with His word, and healed all that were sick." In the tempering of the zeal of the impulsive Scribe (verses 19, 20); in the stern rebuke administered to one who ignobly awaited his father's death before decision to follow Christ was made (ver. 21); in the stilling of the tempest (ver. 24), the calming of the waters, the outcasting of the devils, and the chiding of the disciples' fears—in all these things how conclusive the proof that God's competent King had come! Is it matter for wonder,

that they marvelled exceedingly, saying, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" (ch. viii, 27).

Further, we notice the royal presence in Gadara (verses 28-34). The King of Israel is seen triumphing over the legion of evil spirits which had gathered to contest the possession of the poor demoniac. They are cast out by the same mighty word and driven into the sea (the abyss). Let it not be forgotten that this wonderful display of the power of our Lord in sending the evil spirits into the deep place in the sea distinctly makes known the fact that had Israel received her King, the power of the devil would at that time have been broken.

In the fact of His rejection, this memorable act foreshadows that which shall be when, at our Lord's Second Coming, "that old serpent, the devil," shall be laid hold on and bound, and cast into the bottomless pit, and shut up for a thousand years. (Rev. xx, 2-3). Now follows the solemn and awful testimony which tells of the rejection of the King by the ungodly Gadarenes: "And behold the whole city came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw Him, they besought Him that He would depart out of their coasts" (ver. 34).

Chapter ix reveals still more gloriously the working of the Holy King. His power over disease in the case of the palsied man now affords illustration of His greater power as the Son of Man to forgive sin (ver. 6). His work and office as the Saviour of the sinful and degraded finds a new sphere and fresh subjects in Matthew the publican's house (verses 9-11). Brighter than the unsullied

glory of the noon-day sun is the clear testimony that the diseased of that terrible malady, sin, are to be forgiven and healed by His sovereign power and grace. In these gracious activities Israel should have seen the fulfilment of the precious words, "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases (PSALM ciii, 2). Their unbelief closed their eyes to the glory of the SON OF GOD.

How marked His rebuke of the merciless and unrighteous Pharisees and Scribes! How striking His reminder that, though they were actually the custodians of His Father's words written in the Prophets, they had need to learn what those words meant: "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice (Hos. vi, 6);" for He had "not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (ver. 13)." In all this wonderful adaptation to man's deepest need, are we not face to face with the great fact that the Holy One of God, the competent, powerful, and gracious Sovereign, had come to earth to reign?

It is marvellous that so wonderful and beneficent a ministry as that of Jesus of Nazareth should have stirred the envy and hatred of the chief priests and the Scribes and Pharisees; but such was the case. They not only refused to receive the King, but set themselves in violent opposition, both to His character and His claims. He knew right well the thoughts of their hearts towards Himself, and for a season permitted his Kingly character to remain in unacknowledged and uncrowned abeyance. Now, in words of suggestive tenderness, (ver. 14-15) our Lord vindicates the action of His disciples in reference to

the charge that they did not fast. Was not the heavenly bridegroom with them? How could they fast so long as one so glorious and so regal in His words and works was with them? In an undertone of sadness, the Lord now speaks of the bridegroom being taken from them, and then shall His disciples mourn and fast.

In His rejection by the Scribes and Pharisees, who charged Him with blasphemy, when He forgave the sins of the palsied man, our Lord saw the incipient working which further on would reach its climax in His rejection by the Jewish nation. The forces were even now gathering, whose united voice should be heard saying, "Away with Him! Away with Him! Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" The crisis is rapidly approaching. No mending of Israel's old garment will suffice. The new cloth cannot be added to the old. God's King has been sent among them, but He has not come to occupy the position of a reforming prince. His voice is heard: "Behold! I make all things new." Israel's vesture is worn threadbare. The wearer of the new and seamless robe is at the door. The new wine is ready, but the old bottles will not receive it, they must perish (ver. 16-17). A throne which shall endure for ever—a kingdom which shall never be moved—must not have within it the leaven of wickedness neither the elements of decay. Welcome, Thou Glorious One! A thousand welcomes, Great Monarch of Righteousness!

Face to face with the King of Glory, can we affect surprise that a certain ruler worshipped Him (ver. 18)? That one with vital disease, touching Him in confiding faith, knew His imparted virtue unto perfect personal soundness? (ver.

20-22). We are now prepared to hear that the King of light and of the day instantly responded to the regal cry of the blind in the majestic and suggestive words: "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us." As though our Lord would awaken these suppliants to the intelligence which their cry involved, He adds: "Believe ye that I am able to do this? They say unto Him: Yea, Lord; then touched He their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened, and they spread abroad His fame in all that country" (verses 27-31). Next comes the dumb man—dumb, because possessed with the devil (ver. 32). The great King again acts, and the man is freed from the demon's power. "And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake! and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel" (ver, 33).

Fitting, indeed, as the climax to the mighty and royal worker's day of presentation to Israel, was the raising of the daughter of Jairus from the dead (*see* MARK v, 38-43). Young and fair life, smitten by disease and death, how terrible! but now the Lord of life, the Conqueror of death, stands saying: "The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth." Though, in their rejecting unbelief, they laughed Him to scorn, "He took her by her hand, and the maid arose" (verse 25):—

> "The Saviour raised
> Her hand from off her bosom, and spread out
> The snowy fingers in His palm, and said:
> Maiden! arise! and suddenly a flash
> Shot o'er her forehead! and along her lips,
> And through her cheeks, the rallied colour ran,

And the still outline of her graceful form
Stirred in the linen vesture! and she clasped
The Saviour's hand, and, fixing her dark eyes
Full on His beaming countenance, arose!"

Let us mark well the mighty monarch's path of progress. Leprosy, palsy, fever, impulse, lack of decision, disordered conditions—physical, mental, and spiritual—flee before Him. Yea, devils also, and sin, and death itself, are vanquished by His commanding word. In the presence of the great King, disturbed and conflicting elements are calmed into rest. Fear yields to confidence and repose. Guilt and palsy are exchanged for forgiveness and strength. All physical disability, disease, and death give place before Him whom God exalted, and "sent into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." (JOHN iii, 17).

In the face of this matchless display of Jehovah's beneficent power, committed into the hands of the beloved Son, need we wonder that God should bitterly complain of Israel, saying: Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One—of whom ye have been now the betrayers and the murderers (*Stephen*, in ACTS vii, 51-52). And again, in these solemn and striking words: "All the day long have I stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (ROM. x, 21). What a revelation of the depravity of the human heart is found in the fact that at this very time in our Lord's blessed ministry, we find the appalling words:

"The Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils" (verse 34).

O Israel! Israel! verily thou art filling up the cup of thine iniquity. Is it so, that thy leaders and teachers trace the remedial and blessed working of God's Holy King to the power of the devil? and is this the outcome of the day of our Lord's presentation to thee? Hast thou no voice within thy borders to tell that thou art tracking the path whose fatal goal is to be broken off, and for weary centuries to be found in national desolation, overthrow, and dispersion? Well might the rejected King, a little later in His ministry, behold Jerusalem and weep over it, saying: "If thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes" (LUKE xix, 42).

CHAPTER VIII.

THE KING'S PATIENCE AND ISRAEL'S REJECTION.

THE FATHER OVERRULING ISRAEL'S REJECTION OF HIS BELOVED SON.

"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth" (ISAIAH liii, 1-7).

He read. Sunday 31st Oct 97. 6 am

THE ADVENT SONG.

Thou art coming, O my Saviour!
Thou art coming, O my King!
In Thy beauty, all-resplendent,
In Thy glory, all-transcendent;
Well may we rejoice and sing!
Coming! In the opening east
Herald brightness slowly swells;
Coming! O my glorious Priest,
Hear we not Thy golden bells?

Thou art coming! Thou art coming!
We shall meet Thee on Thy way;
We shall see Thee, we shall know Thee,
We shall bless Thee, we shall show Thee
All our hearts could never say.
What an anthem that will be,
Ringing out our love to Thee,
Pouring out our rapture sweet
At Thine own all-glorious feet!

Oh! the joy to see Thee reigning,
Thee, my own belovèd Lord!
Every tongue Thy name confessing,
Worship, honour, glory, blessing,
Brought to Thee with glad accord!
Thee, my Master, and my Friend,
Vindicated and enthroned!
Unto earth's remotest end
Glorified, adored, and owned!

FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE KING'S PATIENCE AND ISRAEL'S REJECTION.

FEARFUL as are the words with which the last chapter closes, we read (verse 35): "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing every sickness, and every disease among the people." Not easily is divine grace turned away from its object and purpose. Long and tenderly does the Holy One of God bear with man's unbelief and hardness of heart. Not until redeemed Israel had tempted their great Deliverer TEN times did He swear in His wrath that they should not enter into His rest (NUMBERS xiv, 22).

Then, not till then, the awful crisis is reached and the tremendous sentence uttered: "Doubtless, ye shall not come into the land which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb and Joshua. But your little ones, which ye

said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But as for you, your carcases, they shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcases be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, and ye shall know My breach of promise (THE ALTERING OF MY PURPOSE, *margin*). I the Lord have said it; I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation that are gathered against Me. In the wilderness they shall be consumed, and there shall they die" (NUM. xiv, 30-35). I have quoted this remarkable passage because of its appositeness. In the rejection of our Lord Jesus Christ, Israel is again about to fall still more deeply after the same terrible example of unbelief.

Chapter x. brings us to the time of crisis, so far as our Lord's presentation of Himself as the King to the House of Israel is concerned. Sending forth His twelve disciples, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out; and to heal all manner of sickness and disease among the people (verse 1). Forbidding them to go among the Gentiles, or even to enter the cities of the Samaritans, His royal words were: "But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and as ye go, preach! saying: The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (verses 6-7).

The fearful responsibility which those would incur who should reject their testimony is thus given by the King:

"And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words; when ye depart out of that house, or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily, I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city" (verses 14-15).

Fully alive to the impenitent obduracy of the chief priests and Scribes, the rulers and the Pharisees, Jesus said: "Behold! I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves (ver. 16). Beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues (ver. 17), and ye shall be hated of all men for My Name's sake (ver. 22); but when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the SON OF MAN be come" (ver 23). Mark these striking words: The SON OF MAN; this is the second time that our Lord uses this title. What conclusive testimony concerning the rejection of Himself as the King of Israel is found in the use of this name, which the rejected King henceforth assumes!

Prior to the occasion when He spake to the Scribe (ch. viii, 20), and the Pharisees charged Him with blasphemy, our Lord had not used this term. It is deeply interesting to notice that henceforth in all the Gospels it becomes exceedingly prominent, and fills the whole interval between the time of our Lord's rejection as King by Israel and the supreme hour when the SON OF MAN shall sit on the throne of His glory (MATH. XXV, 31). At that hour of magnificent manifestation the kingly title is again taken up, and the title of the SON OF MAN ceases. We read (verse 34): "Then shall the

King (not the Son of Man) say unto them on His right hand: Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom, prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

In the Apocalyptic vision also John saw, in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the SON OF MAN (REV. i, 13); and when He comes to reap the harvest of the earth, so far as His people are concerned, the title SON OF MAN occurs (ch. xiv, 14); but that is the last occasion when this significant name is used. When the holy seer sees heaven opened, and in glowing language proceeds to portray our Lord's Majesty and Glory, he adds: "And he hath on His vesture, and on His thigh, a name written: KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

There can be no question that our Lord's testimony to His disciples: "For verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the SON OF MAN be come," was indicative of the ministry of the Gospel of the grace of God which our Lord, as the SON OF MAN, was about to inaugurate, and which forms the burden of chapter xiii. THERE THE SOWER IS THE SON OF MAN. (verse 37). Full of solemn meaning are the words in which our Lord now indicates that His rejection is about to culminate in the commission of the sin against the Holy Ghost. This is His testimony: "If they have called the Master of the house, Beelzebub (the prince of the devils), how much more shall they call them of His household" (ch. x, 25). In like manner the whole of the subsequent part of this chapter is to be understood and is explicable only in the light of the rejection of the King (see verses 26-42).

Chapter xi. emphasizes the same solemn truth, and announces the approach of overwhelming judgment. John, the great forerunner, is in prison; his disciples, disheartened and wavering, in an undertone of SADNESS and depression ask our Lord: "Art thou He that should come? Or do we look for another?" (verse 3). In order to the confirmation of their faith, the rejected King appeals to His mighty works, His miracles, and His testimony, and sends back the inspiriting word: "Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them; And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me (verses 5-6).

Then follows the solemn testimony of the Lord against the men of that generation. John, sent of God, had come; austere, mighty, full of power and of the Holy Ghost, and they said: "He hath a devil and is mad, why hear ye Him?" "The SON OF MAN" (the title now taken by the rejected King) "had come eating and drinking, and they say: Behold! a man gluttonous and a winebibber! a friend of publicans and sinners!" "*But*," He adds, "wisdom is justified of her children" (verses 18-19).

Next in order comes the witness of Christ against the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes" (verse 21).

Surely it cannot be affirmed that this experience indicates the slightest proof of a moral evolutionary process going on. Here is entire absence of desire for "the survival of the fittest." Here is the strongest possible proof of human degeneracy; the deliberate choice of evil made in the face of the clearest shining of the light of God.

Now follows the sentence of the KING upon His own city, Capernaum—the city which for three years shared the wonderful honour and the high responsibility of being the residence of the uncrowned, but anointed SON of GOD: "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day. But I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee" (verses 23-24).

CHAPTER IX.

THE FATHER'S ABOUNDING GRACE.

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (ROMANS v, 6-11).

THE RESTING PLACE.

"My heart is resting, O my God,
I will give thanks and sing;
My heart is at the secret source
Of every precious thing:
Now the frail vessel Thou hast made
No hand but Thine shall fill;
For the waters of this world have failed,
And I am thirsty still.

I thirst for springs of heavenly life,
And here all day they rise;
I seek the treasure of Thy love,
And close at hand it lies;
And a new song is in my mouth
To long-loved music set,
Glory to Thee for all the grace
I have not tasted yet.

Glory to Thee for strength withheld,
For want and weakness known;
And the fear that sends me to Thyself
For what is most my own:
I have a heritage of joy
That yet I must not see;
But the Hand that bled to make it mine,
Is keeping it for me."

A. L. WARING.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FATHER'S ABOUNDING GRACE.

PRECIOUS beyond all human thought to apprehend is the testimony of the King at this solemn and eventful crisis. Rejected by His own, "His own receiving Him not," the Lord of glory retreats into what we may well call the sovereignty of the Father. Amidst the abounding of Israel's sin, the SON OF MAN recognizes the grace of the Holy Father to be much more abounding. Hearken to the sublime words of Him who saith: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and finish the work."

At that time (the time of His rejection) Jesus answered and said: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these thing from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes, even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight" (verses 25, 26). Already the dark shadow of the Cross is seen by the holy Lamb of God; nevertheless, there follows one of

the most wonderful confessions of faith ever heard even from our blessed Lord: "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father! and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him" (verse 27).

His rejection by man had no power to impair His confidence in God. Our blessed Lord believed that the Holy Father would overrule His rejection in such a way as to further His eternal purpose. His coming betrayal, His agony and bloody sweat, His crucifixion and shameful death, were the stern and terrible, but sure precursors of His complete victory over sin and hell. Well did His strong faith sustain Him as He went forth to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Clearly did our Lord apprehend that His deliverance unto the death of the Cross by the hands of wicked men should fulfil the predetermined counsel of His Father and His God (Acts ii, 23). Who can measure the peace and rest which this knowledge imparted to His weary and submissive spirit? Sweetly doth the Holy Child affirm: "For that He is at my right hand, that I should not be moved; therefore did my heart rejoice and my tongue was glad" (Acts iii 25-26). Well might His holy soul, in pitying love, look out upon the dark scene of rejection which immediately surrounded His disciples, and breathe the comforting refrain: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (verse 28).

Seen in this remarkable connection and context, how wonderful are these words—how deep their meaning! How many weary spirits amongst our Lord's disciples at that

time found an oasis—a resting-place—in Himself, where otherwise all had been desert, trouble, and alarm! It is so still. Dismayed at the awful fact of the world's persistent rejection of the SON OF MAN, awaiting with confidence His return, occupying in weakness and fear until that day, no sweeter sound can enter the ear or penetrate the heart of His expectant people than this peaceful refrain: "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (ver. 29). This startling chapter practically sums up the testimony concerning the rejection by Israel of her Lord and King. It will be observed that from the human side every verse tells of failure, opposition, and rejection, yea, also, of pronounced condemnation and judgment.

Chapter xii. brings us to the dread climax pointed out by our Lord in the later part of His ministry. Leaving the temple for the last time, it will be remembered that He said: "Behold! your house is left unto you desolate; for I say unto you, ye shall not see my face henceforth till ye shall say: 'blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.'" (MATT. xxiii, 28, 29).

Deliberately rejecting the heir of God and the king of Israel, the Pharisees and the rulers of the Jews now manifest that intense hatred which appears rapidly to develop into a form of spiritual madness. Yielding themselves to the demons who of old precipitated Cain's wrath into the fearful crime of the fratricide, their malice and antagonism know no bounds. They seize upon the scene in the cornfield, the hungry disciples, the Sabbath day, the withered hand, the synagogue, our

Lord's words—indeed, anything wherewith to make common cause and council against Him. In their perverted and wrested judgments the synagogue had been profaned and the Sabbath desecrated by our Lord's merciful healing of the man with the withered hand.

What more likely to their minds than another desecration? Was it not clear that it was the Sabbath? Would not this restored limb be used to break God's law in the first cornfield in which the newly acquired energy could find expression? Such was their reading of the law. So ready were they to hasten the condemnation of the Guiltless One, and to bring God's blameless Priest to judgment and death. To lay hold of a sheep fallen into a pit on the Sabbath day, and pull it out—well, that was lawful; but that the Holy One of God should pour His overflowing healthfulness into the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath day—this their cruel envy could not bear. This activity of goodness stirred their deepest hatred, and excited them to an intensity of rage.

Mark it well! In verse 14 we read: "Then the Pharisees went out and held a council against Jesus, how they might destroy Him. To heal a man on the Sabbath day, this was unlawful. To hold a council the same day, when the service of the synagogue was over, provided the object was to destroy the Holy Son of God—this was lawful enough. They had no scruples about profaning the Sabbath, provided this issue could be secured!

Ye blind Pharisees! Well did the Lord say concerning you: "Ye blind guides, ye strain out a gnat and swallow a camel; ye take tithe of mint, and anise, and cumin, and

have omitted the weightier matters of the law—mercy, judgment, and faith. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents! ye generation of vipers! how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (MATT. xxiii, 23-24; xxvii, 28-33).

And now the climax of human guilt is reached. Unable to deny the wonderful power and grace of the rejected King, they charge Him with casting out devils by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. How full of wisdom His rebuke: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and if Satan cast out Satan he is divided against himself, how shall then his kingdom stand? But if I cast out devils by the spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you" (verses 24-28).

It is impossible to estimate the awful character of the sin of which the Scribes and Pharisees were guilty in attributing to the devil the power by which our Lord's miracles were wrought. This is one form of the sin against the Holy Ghost, for which there is no forgiveness for ever.

I give our Lord's words in their entirety. The chief priests, and the Scribes and Pharisees having now taken the position of the definite rejection of God's Holy King, saying: "He hath an unclean spirit" (MARK iii, 30), the Lord answered them: "He that is not with Me, is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me,

scattereth abroad (v. 30); wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the SON OF MAN, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come" (verses 31-32).

Well may John write: "There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he shall pray for it" (JOHN v, 16). So, also, in the Gospel of Mark: "Whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an ETERNAL sin, because they said he hath an unclean spirit" (chap. iii, 29-30. R.V.).

Rejecting Him whom God had sent, "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel," darkness in the form of judicial blindness is now falling upon the Jewish house. Well did our Lord warn them: "If the light which is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (MATT. vi, 30: How dark is the darkness—*Alford*). Refusing to receive Him who is the head of the generation of the righteous, the Scribes and Pharisees became a generation of vipers, whose measure of iniquity was running over. Rejecting the light they became blind leaders of the blind. Putting away the truth of God presented in His well-beloved Son, their hearts became a treasury of abundant evil store (verse 35).

The solemn account is now tabulated and made up, the evidence of facts is returned to the high court of heaven, and the closing testimony, made in view of the judgment of the great day, falls from the lips of the rejected King.

CHAPTER X.

THE REJECTION OF THE KING.

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure. Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son: this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (PSALM ii).

THE DEVIL.

Men don't believe in a Devil now, as their fathers used to do;
They forced the door of the broadest creed to let his Majesty through.
There isn't a print of his cloven foot, or a fiery dart from his bow,
To be found in earth or air to-day, for the world has voted so.

But who is it mixing the fatal draught that palsies heart and brain,
And loads the bier of each passing year with ten hundred thousand slain?
Who blights the bloom of the land to-day with the fiery breath of hell,
If the Devil isn't, and never was? Won't somebody rise and tell?

Who dogs the steps of the toiling saint, and digs the pit for his feet?
Who sows the tares in the field of time wherever God sows His wheat?
The Devil is voted not to be, and, of course, the thing is true;
But who is doing the kind of work the Devil alone should do?

We are told he does not go around like a roaring lion now;
But whom shall we hold responsible for the everlasting row
To be heard in home, in Church and State, to the earth's remotest bound,
If the Devil by a unanimous vote is nowhere to be found?

Won't somebody step to the front forthwith, and make their bow and show
How the frauds and the crimes of a single day spring up? We want to know.
The Devil was fairly voted out, and, of course, the Devil's gone,
But simple people would like to know who carries his business on.

ALFRED J. HOUGH.

CHAPTER X.

THE REJECTION OF THE KING

THE end draweth nigh. "Then certain of the Scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying: Master, we would see a sign from Thee. But He answered: An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; but there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas" (verses 39-40). It is as though our Lord should speak, saying: "Sorrow, betrayal, and death are before me now. Signs of royalty have given place and are passed away. Ye knew not the time of your visitation; now it has passed from your eyes."

Withal, "the men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation and shall condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the South shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, for she came from the uttermost

parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here" (verses 41, 42).

At this point follows one of the most solemn and instructive passages ever uttered by our Lord. It throws a flood of light upon the condition of Israel at the time these words were spoken. Beyond this, however, the whole passage is a striking prophecy of what the experience of Israel as a people would be during the whole period of the absence of the King.

Our Lord said, therefore: "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return unto my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept and garnished. Then goeth he and taketh with himself seven other spirits, more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first; even so shall it be unto this wicked generation" (verses 43-45).

The last clause of this passage shews clearly that our Lord's words were directed against the Jewish house. What a picture is this: the house of Israel declared by our Lord to be EMPTY, despite the sweeping and garnishing to which, to some extent, the chief priests and rulers had submitted it. Twice during His ministry did our Lord assume authority and drive out from the temple the unhallowed defilements which were therein permitted. Had He not overthrown the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of those who sold doves? Were not His

drastic and stalwart words of reproof fresh in the memory of many: "My house shall be called, of all nations, a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves" (MARK xi, 17).

Yea, verily, the unclean spirit had been driven out by the Divine King. The Jewish house consented thus far; but, alas, though swept and garnished, it was neither cleansed nor possessed of its Lord and Head. The chief priests and rulers, the Scribes and the Pharisees, again and again had refused either to recognise or receive the Lord of the Temple.

Little did the unclean spirit care for his own outcasting! Well did he know that the sweeping and garnishing of the house meant little, provided the King was denied and refused residence. It was simply a question of time, and he would be welcomed back again. He had too many friends among the Pharisees—those whited sepulchres, full of dead men's bones—to call in question their readiness in due time to welcome his return. "Even thus shall it be, also, to this wicked generation" (house or people). Appalling and terrible words, but how solemnly true!

It is an undoubted fact that from this time forth, until with united voice, they cried: "We have no king, but Cæsar. We will not have this man to reign over us. Away with Him! Away with Him! Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" the attitude of Israel toward God's King was that of ceaseless hostility and hatred. Rejecting the Holy One of God, they not only delivered Him to betrayal, false judgment, and death; but they speedily

welcomed back, in intensified and awful completeness, the unclean spirit.

For nineteen long centuries the evil spirit has not only kept the houses of Israel and Judah from the government of their Lord and King, but he has been retained in enthroned possession. Nay, more, the acquiesence of Israel in the governmental iniquities which have been common to the whole course of Gentile history has been secured. Beyond this, and very solemnly, their testimony for the God of Israel before the world has been a signal and melancholy failure.

What a contradiction, thus far, has Israel's history been to the promise made to Abraham, that "In thee, and in thy seed, shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Admitting fully how much is owing to Israel, from whom, as Paul puts it, "according to the flesh, Christ came," and the incalculable blessings resulting from the Scriptures given to them, nevertheless their history has been a terrible one. Instead of influencing the nations of the earth for righteousness, they have suffered the love of gain, the "covetousness which is idolatry," to blight their whole history. Their keen perception of gain and issue led to the use of the proverb: "It's worth a Jew's eye"; their inordinate love of wealth to that other expression: "As rich as a Jew"; whilst Shakespeare's Shylock and the "full pound of flesh" strikes home concerning the cruel greed which the thirst for money has rendered so marked a feature in the experience and character of Israel. We cannot

affect surprise at this. Refusing to worship the living God, rejecting the true riches which came to them in Christ, they must find an object of supreme affection somewhere. Mammon is a sorry exchange for the living God, whether Jew or Gentile makes it. The exchange, however, Israel made. We have it as a great fact that "nature abhors a vacuum." Israel would not have the heart tenanted by the living God; the inevitable followed. The worship of Mammon came in.

Verily, it may be said, how are the mighty fallen! The precious sons of Zion, by God Himself compared to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers—the work of the hands of the potter! "Truly, the gold has become dim, the most fine gold changed" (LAM. iv, 1, 2).

Eminently appropriate in our study of the presentation and rejection of the King is the closing scene given at the 46th verse of the twelfth chapter of MATTHEW: "While He yet talked to the people, behold! His mother and His brethren stood without desiring to speak with Him. Then one said unto Him: Behold! Thy mother and Thy brethren desire to speak with Thee. But He answered: Who is My mother and who are My brethren? And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said: Behold! My mother and My brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My mother, and sister, and brother" (46-50).

Surely an undertone of sorrow may be discerned in these remarkable words. Earthly relationships are declining and receding now. The wider brotherhood of the SON OF

MAN is coming to the fore. The sun of Israel's glory is setting by reason of her rejection of the King; but the SON OF MAN is about to enter a new and a world-wide sphere of service in the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God. Thus, immediately we read (chap. xiii, 3): "Behold! a sower went forth to sow." "The sower, the SON OF MAN" (verse 37). "The field, the world" (not limited to Israel now); the seed, the incorruptible word by which the SON OF MAN begets and brings the "many sons unto glory"; the harvest, observe, not the end of the world, but the consummation of the Age (*aion*). "Then," not before, "shall the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" (chap. xlii, 43).

CHAPTER XI.

THE TIMES OF THE SON OF MAN.

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God. Saying, We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth" (REV. xi, 15-18).

O where is He that trod the sea,
O where is He that spake,
And demons from their victims flee,
The dead their slumber break :
The palsied rise in freedom strong,
The dumb men talk and sing,
And from blind eyes, benighted long,
Bright beams of morning spring ?

O where is He that trod the sea ?
'Tis only He can save ;
To thousands hungering wearily
A wondrous meal He gave :
The Word, Who all the worlds had made,
To His own creatures spake ;
'Twas springtide when He blest the bread,
And harvest when He brake.

O where is He that trod the sea ?
My soul, the Lord is here :
Let all thy fears be hushed in thee,
Be thine to know Him near :
Thy utmost needs He'll satisfy :
Art thou diseased or dumb,
Or dost thou in thy hunger cry ?
" I come," saith Christ, " I come."

T. T. Lynch.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TIMES OF THE SON OF MAN.

I CANNOT doubt that what has been stated concerning the SON OF MAN will arrest the thought of the reader. I therefore purpose adding to that testimony the following interesting details. This title is maintained by our Lord from the time of His rejection by the Jews until He comes to the judgment of the living nations (Christendom) at the commencement of His reign over the whole earth. At the scene of this judgment the title SON OF MAN gives place to His regal one, the King (*see* MATT. xxv, 34).

When our Lord inquired of His disciples concerning the estimate formed of Him, He asked: "Whom do men say that I, the SON OF MAN, am?" (ch. xvi, 13). It was as the SON OF MAN coming in His kingdom, that the disciples saw His transfigured glory (ch. xvii, 1-9). As the SON OF MAN He was betrayed, killed, and raised again (ch. xvii, 22, 23). It was as the SON OF MAN

that He forgave sin (ch. ix, 6), and came to seek and save that which was lost (ch. xviii, 11). As the SON OF MAN He gave His life a ransom for many (MARK x, 45). As the SON OF MAN He is to be confessed (LUKE xii, 8).

As the SON OF MAN He was to be lifted up (JOHN iii, 14); as the SON OF MAN His Father glorified Him (JOHN xii, 23); as the SON of MAN He ascended (JOHN vi, 62); as the SON OF MAN He is in heaven (JOHN iii, 13). It was the SON OF MAN whom Stephen saw standing on the right hand of God (ACTS vii, 56). It is the SON OF MAN into whose hands all judgment is committed (JOHN v, 27); the SON OF MAN whose flesh and blood is to be eaten in order to Eternal Life (JOHN vi, 53). It is the SON OF MAN who will raise His believing people from the dead in the early dawn of the last day (verse 54), the Millennial morning, the day which the Lord hath made, and which is with Him as "a thousand years" (2 PET. iii, 8). It is as the SON OF MAN that He comes in power and great glory (MATT. xxiv, 30). As the SON OF MAN He inaugurates the times of the regeneration (ch. xix, 28). It is as the Mighty King that our Lord sits upon the throne of His glory (ch. xxv, 31-34).

Equally remarkable is it to notice that it is the SON OF MAN whom Daniel sees brought before the Ancient of Days. In the Father's presence the prophet sees the SON OF MAN invested with the sovereignty of the whole earth (DAN. vii, 13, 14). Let us hear once more the inspiring word: "When the SON OF MAN shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory" (MATT. xxv, 31).

It will be observed that at the time when this judgment takes place our Lord's title as the SON OF MAN ceases. It has filled the whole interval between His rejection as King by Israel on earth, and His investiture as King of kings and Lord of lords by His Father in the heavens. Henceforth, our Lord is the great King over all the earth (*see* PSALM xlvii, 2). How gloriously this Psalm sets forth the majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ during the Millennial Age.

Now let us hearken to the beloved Apostle: "I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called faithful and true, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. . . . And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean; and out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron (strength), and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. . . And he hath on his vesture, and on his thigh, a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (REV. xix, 11-16).

The book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ knows no allusion to the SON OF MAN subsequently to the Apostle's vision of Him in connection with the harvest of His Church (ch. xiv, 15, 16). John, in his Gospel, uses the expression the SON OF MAN repeatedly; but now that he is writing of the times and seasons which belong to the judgments of heaven in the last days of this evil age, he uses these remarkable and glorious words: "From Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first be-

gotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth;" and again: "I am Alpha, and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and is to come—the Almighty" (ch. i, 5-8).

It is not within the compass of my work to enter into any detailed study of "The Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ"; but I cannot forbear stating my firm conviction that the primary fulfilment of the judgments given in this book are certainly future. That great historical events were foreshadowed in the symbolism of the Apocalypse, I see no reason to doubt, nevertheless I believe that the burden of the testimony from the fourth chapter to the commencement of the twentieth, where Satan is bound and shut up in prison, represents the war of heaven against Satanic and human wickedness in the last days.

We may rest assured that when that war begins there will be no room to question either its character or its terrible reality. The judgments, in their very nature, are among the things which cannot be hidden. The world will know of their fulfilment—they cannot be done in a corner. Seeing that they involve a series of supernatural and overwhelming manifestations of the power and wrath of God, which end in the subjugation of all existing authority and power to the government of the Lord Jesus Christ, may we not affirm that it is unlike the working of the Almighty God to make those judgments embrace a period of ten, twelve, or fifteen, centuries? Judgment is God's strange work, in the protraction of which He hath no pleasure (Isa. xxviii, 21, 22).

Hence I venture to suggest that a system of interpretation which embraces this prolonged view is open to strong objection and is not according to the mind of God. The judgment of the flood, of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Pharaoh and his hosts; of Israel within twelve months of the Exodus, of the overthrow of Jerusalem; of the Lord's presentation to Israel, their speedy rejection of Him, and consequent overthrow—all bespeak on the divine side marked rapidity of action.

I am aware that a strong point is made of the unlikelihood of so magnificent and wonderful a series of prophecies and judgments being fulfilled in so short a space of time as the futurist view permits, viz., seven years. I do not recognize this as an insuperable difficulty. The conditions which exist to-day, both in regard to facility of travel and rapidity of action amongst men, need to be taken into account and carefully considered.

As an illustration, taken from the Apocalypse itself, we observe: The Babylon of the seventeenth chapter evidently portrays the corrupt and comprehensive gathering of the false religious systems having place in Christendom. All which has been antagonistic to the doctrine of God and his Christ here finds place, in order to the most solemn and awful judgment. Evidently the judgment of Babylon, ecclesiastically, is given. That judgment is sudden, instant, and overwhelming. The eighteenth chapter also, which gives the overthrow of the literal and real city of Babylon, records, in the most striking words, the same thought. It is written in the eighth verse: "Therefore shall her

plagues come in ONE day—death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." Babylon, which evidently will have been rebuilt and become a vast centre of commercial activity, stimulating the business energies of the whole earth, is singled out specially; but it is clear that the judgment of Babylon—commercial, ecclesiastical, and social—takes place at the same time. In chapter xvi, 17-20, concerning the time of the overthrow, we read: "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air: and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying: It is done. And there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, AND THE CITIES OF THE NATIONS FELL, and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found." These impressive words give some idea of the tremendous convulsions which will shake the earth to her foundations. In view of these solemn events, Paul might well write: "And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things which are shaken, as of things which are made; that those things which cannot be shaken may remain, where we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire" (HEB. xii, 27-29).

The American war which desolated the whole continent, lasted but four years. The campaign in the Crimea, the more recent wars between France and Austria, Germany and France, Russia and Turkey, all emphasize the fact to which I would direct attention.

When war begins in the heavenlies, the devil being cast out and come down to earth, knowing that the time is short, assuredly the Lord will then, according to His Word, "finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness; because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth" (Rom. ix, 28, 29). Nor can I doubt that Paul, in emphasizing the words of Isaiah, clearly indicated that it would be so. He adds: "And as Isaiah said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrah" (Isaiah i, 9).

That my readers may see clearly the force of this argument, I quote the words given in Rev. xii, 7-12: "And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven (the high places, the heavenlies). And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent the devil, and Satan which deceiveth the whole world, he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven: Now is come salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down which accused them before God day and night. And they overcame him by the

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blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea, for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a *short time*."

Our Lord, speaking of the awful scenes of these last days, says: "For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath *shortened* the days" (MARK xiii, 19, 20).

CHAPTER XII.

THE VISION OF THE KINGDOM.

"And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore His arm brought salvation unto him; and His righteousness it sustained Him. For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon His head: and He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak. According to their deeds, accordingly He will repay, fury to His adversaries, recompense to his enemies; to the islands He will repay recompense. So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun: when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for Me, this is My covenant with them, saith the Lord; My Spirit that is upon thee, and My words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever" (ISAIAH, lix, 16-21).

They stand, those halls of Zion, all jubilant with song,
And bright with many an angel, and many a martyr throng.
The Prince is ever in them, the light is aye serene ;
The mansions of the blessed are decked in glorious sheen.
There is the throne of David, and there, from toil released,
The shout of them that triumph, the song of them that feast ;
And they beneath their Leader, who conquered in the fight,
For ever and for ever are clad in robes of white.
I know not, oh ! I know not, what social joys are there :
What radiancy of glory ! What light, beyond compare !
And when I fain would sing them, my spirit fails and faints,
And vainly tries to image the assembly of the saints.

BERNARD OF CLUGNY.

CHAPTER XII.

THE VISION OF THE KINGDOM.

SOLEMN and suggestive as this sketch of the coming, presentation, and rejection of the Holy One of Israel is, I do not wish the inference to be drawn that the subsequent chapters of Matthew's Gospel contain nothing which relates to the Lord Jesus Christ as King. For purposes of sound exposition, however, I would distinguish the kingly incidents found in the later sections of this Gospel as having prophetic and prospective reference. They do not belong to our Lord's character and position as the King of the Jews. They are to be regarded rather as earnests and foreshinings of His glory when He comes the second time to be King over all the earth (ZECH. xiv, 9).

A remarkable illustration of this prophetic testimony is seen at the close of the sixteenth chapter, where our Lord, speaking to His disciples, says: "Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall

not taste of death till they see the SON OF MAN coming in His kingdom" (verse 28). I am aware that these words have been interpreted as having reference to the growth and spread of the Gospel, and to the power and glory of the Lord's spiritual kingdom, empowered and extended at Pentecost. Is not this interpretation, however, necessarily strained and out of joint? Surely, the true and faithful exegesis is that which is found in the context (viz., chap. xvii, 1-9). In the preceding verses the Lord Jesus had been instructing His disciples that the losses entailed by taking His cross and forsaking the present evil world (age), would be abundantly compensated when "the SON OF MAN shall come in the glory of His Father, with His angels," and then He shall reward every man according to his works (verse 27). The seventeenth chapter (verses 1-9) undoubtedly gives the correct exposition of our Lord's remarkable words. The manifestation of the glory on the summit of the high mountain was the picture in miniature, or, as the Lord Himself called it, "the vision," of His coming kingdom.

I at once substantiate this statement by calling the Apostle John and Simon Peter as witnesses for the absolute certainty of this view. Before entering upon the closer study of this intensely interesting scene, we notice the fact that the Lord forbade the disciples to say anything concerning "the vision" of the kingdom "till the SON OF MAN was risen from the dead" (verse 9).

This prohibition was faithfully maintained until after our Lord's resurrection. Then both John and Peter speak with incisive clearness concerning the coming king-

dom. I specially ask attention to the remarkable language of the Apostle, taught, as he had been, by the Lord Himself, and by the revelation of the glory on the summit of the mount, of which he had been an eye-witness. After urging upon believers the great truth that, in view of our Lord's coming and glory, they had purposely been made partakers of the divine nature, and of the exceeding great and precious promises which attach thereto (verses 3, 4), he affectionately intreats them to give all diligence to make their calling and election sure; "for so an *entrance* shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; for we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father, honour and glory" (these were denied Him by Israel), "when there came such a voice from the excellent glory: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; and this voice, which came from heaven, we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount" (2 PETER, i, 11-16).

This expression: "We have *not followed cunningly devised fables*," is most timely, and affords an admirable and necessary rebuke to those who speak of the personal and pre-Millennial appearing of the glory of our Great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, as "a fanciful and ingenious theory."

Nothing could be more appropriate or vigorous than the Apostle's language. The identity of the scene on the Mount of Transfiguration with the coming kingdom of our Lord and Saviour is absolutely conclusive. The

limit of the time of the commanded silence has not been reached in vain. The Apostles now write in sober and yet glowing language of the coming kingdom and glory.

John says (1 JOHN ii, 28): "And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He shall appear we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. . . . Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 JOHN, iii, 1-11).

In Matthew, chap. xvii, 1, we read: "And after six days, Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain, apart, and was transfigured before them. And His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light. And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias, talking with Him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus: Lord, it is good for us to be here; if Thou wilt, let us make, here, three tabernacles—one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said: This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him! And when the disciples heard, they fell on their faces, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said: Arise! and be not afraid! And when they had lifted up their eyes they saw no man, save Jesus only. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying: Tell the vision to no man, until the SON OF MAN be risen again from the dead" (chap. xvii, 1-9).

CHAPTER XIII.

THE KING'S GLORY MANIFESTED.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made" (JOHN i, 1-3).

"Come ye yourselves apart, and rest awhile" (MARK vi, 31).

O God of glorious majesty,
  Messiah, King of grace,
Unveil to us Thy loveliness,
  And let us see Thy face.

Obedient to Thy loving voice,
  We've turned aside awhile
To rest beside Thy guiding feet,
  And bask beneath Thy smile.

Oh, nerve us for the conflict, Lord,
  That thickens day by day,
And in the midst of alien foes,
  Thy banner to display!

We've but a little while to fight,—
  To work,—to wait for Thee;
Help us to labour in Thy cause,
  With mighty energy!

Help us upon our watch to stand,
  And never quail for fear,
Till, in the glowing eastern sky,
  The morning star appear.

Then, with Thy waiting saints above,
  Thine advent, Lord, we'll hail;
And over death, and sin, and woe,
  We'll joyfully prevail!

PENNEFATHER.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE KING'S GLORY MANIFESTED.

WONDERFUL, and intensely interesting is this vision of the Son of Man coming in His kingdom. How my spirit longs for the touch of the Beloved One, that, without fear, and in the glowing imagery born of a sanctified imagination, I might tell of His glory!

First and foremost stands the transfigured and glorified Son of Man—His face shining in the dazzling brightness which belongs to the Creator of the orb of day: "And His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them." (The beloved physician also.) "And as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment became white and glistening," revealing suddenly His manifested glory. There the beloved Son stands in brilliancy and beauty. Well might John write, in chaste and strong diction: "We have seen His glory, the glory

of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Next, and accompanying the glorified Son, is seen the returned Shekinah cloud wherein the Holy Father dwelleth. His gracious voice we hear, telling of well-pleasing and delight in the Son of His love. He cometh to "witness concerning Him by whom He hath spoken, and of whom it is written that God hath appointed Him heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds: Who, being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and who upholdeth all things by the word of His power," that when, by His own sacrifice, He should purge our sins, should sit down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. How blessed the words: "Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they;" and again: "Let all the angels of God worship Him" (Heb. i, 2-6). He that abideth in the light to which no man can approach, shareth this revealing of the Christ, and cometh again to earth.

Thirdly, we notice the presence of Moses and Elijah. They are manifested in glory, and hold converse with their Lord—Moses, Israel's great leader, God's lawgiver, and mediator unto Christ—pledge and proof that those who have fallen asleep, so far as the body is concerned, are in spirit "present with the Lord," and hasten His kingdom and glory from the heavenly sphere, even as we, who "love His appearing," hasten that coming from the earthly sphere. Moses in glory, associate of Christ, partaker of divine heirship, pledge and forerunner,

earnest and part proof that all, from Abel downwards, to the latest of those who die in the Lord, shall, when He appears, be manifested with Him in His kingdom.

Elijah, also, chief of the great prophetic line, whose zeal for Jehovah's glory burned in noble fellowship until the holy flame drew from heaven the chariot of translation and of fire. A moment's pause, and the mortal hath put on immortality, the corruptible hath put on incorruption, and the rough warrior of Carmel hath passed, without dying, into the presence of the King; Elijah in glory, associate of Christ, partaker of divine heirship, who had no share in death, pledge and forerunner, earnest and part proof, bearing witness that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not see death, but that when He appears we shall be instantly changed and caught up with the risen and glorified dead to meet the Lord in the air (1 THESS. iv, 17).

"Behold," saith the Apostle,—the man, be it observed, who was converted by the sudden appearing of the glory of the Lord in the heaven (ACTS xxvi, 13), "I shew you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 COR. xv, 52-54).

Hark! the voices of the glorified Lord and His exalted "*fellows*" claim our attention. They speak of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem; first, the sufferings and then the glory—the Cross, in its

darkness and shame, preceding the kingdom, the crown, and the coming.

Mark, again, the high mountain's summit. Is it not written, and shall it not be fulfilled: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it; and many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob." And again: "They shall not hurt, nor destroy, in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." And yet again: "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of His holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King" (Isa. ii, 2, 3; xi; Psa. xlviii, 1, 2).

Nor fail to notice Peter, James, and John, spiritual, whole-hearted consecrated men, of earthly origin, but intensely loyal to their Lord. Have we not here the fitting and typical witnesses of the kind and quality of manhood which will grace the earth during the Millennial Age—men whose life and character will ever be identified with the service of the King?

Again, let us heed Peter's request concerning the making of the "three tabernacles." Why this thought, of all others, in the Apostle's mind? Is this fanciful speculation which I advance, when I affirm that the reason is to be found in the fact of our Lord's instruction, that

He had been shewing His disciples, as they ascended the high mountain, that in the Jewish "feast of tabernacles" the earth's coming festival of righteousness and peace during His beneficent reign was instanced and foreshadowed? That as Israel, after harvest, kept this last feast with great joy beneath hastily improvised dwellings formed of thick boughs and luxurious foliage (*see* the graphic account in NEH. viii), so the days should surely come, the times of gladness, in which the whole earth should break forth in the universal anthem of His praise. Well d'd the sweet singer of Irsael anticipate that regal scene when he sang: "This is Jehovah's doing, it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (PSALM cxviii, 23, 24).

But the vision is past, and the manifested glory of the Coming King withdrawn. He who of old emptied Himself of His glory, and took upon Him the form of a servant, now stands before His disciples as "Jesus only with themselves." The unadorned beauty of the Lord is there, but the dazzling brightness holds back from shining. 'Tis well it should be so, otherwise the vision of the coming Kingdom would be incomplete.

The teaching is prophetic and necessarily prospective. The testimony concerneth the great facts which will have place at His coming again in power and great glory. Could we see into the heart of our gracious Lord at this time we should discover an attractive force strongly inclining to the descent from the mountain's summit. Beholding the glories of the coming kingdom,

Peter said: "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if Thou wilt, let us make three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah" (ver. 4). Could we hear the voice of our Glorious King, His reply would be: "It is better to descend. My time hath not yet come." Away, down at the base of the high mountain, another and a very different scene is in progress. A number of our Lord's disciples are there; the restless multitude, also, and the Scribes and Pharisees busy plying their crude and profitless trade of subtle and crafty questionings. See, they are surrounded by a large and motley crowd, in the centre of which stands a father, heart-broken and weeping over the condition of his poor demon-possessed boy.

What a prophetic, graphic, and real picture is here presented of the past and present condition of the world, the strife of tongues, the crowding and the questioning, the strife and the quarrelling, the attention which centres in the various estimates of the Great Prophet now descending from the mountain summit. Here is the weakness of discipleship, the failure of moral force. Here also the malignant and destructive power of the evil one, the resolute and overcoming devil seen as more than a match for the nine disciples who awaited their Lord's return. Here the helplessness of a father's affection and faith, here also the fearful bondage of the poor boy, half human, half demon. Let it not be forgotten that we have in all an initial picture, not only of the results which the rejection of Christ to Israel seemed, but an illustrative prophecy of the condition of the world so long as the accursed yoke of

the god of this age is accepted and continued. Well might our Lord say: "The thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly" (JOHN x, 10).

No wonder that the disciples awaited His coming. How His descent concentrated their attention! What His energy will accomplish is their joyous hope and expectation. How striking His words! "Oh! faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to ME." "And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears: Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief. When Jesus saw that the people came running together He rebuked the foul spirit: Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee come out of him, and enter no more into him. And the spirit cried and rent him sore, and came out of him, and he was as one dead! insomuch that many said, he is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up and he arose." (MARK ix, 24-27). His mighty and gracious power is again displayed; the demon cast out and forbidden to re-enter; the boy delivered and restored; the father comforted; the disciples energized; the Scribes silenced, and the multitude astonished at His mighty working (MARK ix, 17-32, R.V.).

And now, may I not ask: And what is this whole scene but an intelligent, initial, and prophetic vision foreshadowing the coming kingdom and the deliverance to be effected by the power of the Lord? Well might Peter affirm: "We have not followed cunningly

devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty." And yet again: "We have a more sure word of prophecy whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light which shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise in your hearts." (2 PET. i, 16, 17).

Be it observed, "A LIGHT that shineth," not "a voice that speaketh"—"The time cometh when a scoffing rationalism will overbear the burden of testimony, and silence the voice of the witnesses; but the light will still shine. To this clear light, let every believer take heed, till the day dawns when the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star, shall be seen, for His coming shall bring to an end the long night of this dark and weary age.

CHAPTER XIV.

GREAT DAVID'S GREATER SON.

"And in mercy shall the throne be established : and He shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness" (ISAIAH xvi, 5).

"My heart is inditing a good matter : I speak of the things which I have made touching the king : my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. Thou art fairer than the children of men : grace is poured into thy lips : therefore God hath blessed thee for ever. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness ; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies ; whereby the people fall under thee. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever : the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness : therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (PSALM xlv, 1-7).

"And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary : for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest : and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David ; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever ; and of His kingdom there shall be no end" (LUKE i, 30-33).

ANTICIPATION.

"When He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 JOHN, iii, 2).

Jesus, Thou King of kings,
  Thou Messenger of grace,
When shall the golden gates unfold,
  And we behold Thy face?

Girt with the thorny crown
  We've seen Thy wounded brow;
But we shall see Thee in Thy power,
  As angels see Thee now!

We've gazed upon Thy cross,
  Where Thou didst hang in shame;
We'll see Thee on Thy throne of light,
  Bearing a royal name!

Earth needs Thee as her King;
  And Jewish exiles cry,
Come, David's Son, to David's throne,
  And reign eternally!

Thy Church, amidst her tears,
  Throughout the weary night,
Looks forth to catch the quiv'ring ray
  Of morning's dawning light.

Return, O Lord, return!
  Why should Thy chariot stay?
I long to hear Thy words of love,
  "Rise up, and come away!"

PENNEFATHER.

CHAPTER XIV.

GREAT DAVID'S GREATER SON.

IT will be remembered that prior to the thrilling incidents referred to in the foregoing chapter our Lord made the inquiry: "Whom do men say that I, the SON OF MAN, am?" The disciples answered: "Some say that Thou art John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, Whom say ye that I am? Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art the CHRIST, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him: Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven" (MATT. xvi, 13-17).

This revelation of Jesus as the CHRIST, to Peter by the Father, is full of prophetic significance. How came it that Peter did not answer: "Thou art Jesus of Nazareth"; or "the King of the Jews"; or "the Son of Man"; or "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the

world"? Why the emphatic word: "Thou art the CHRIST"? What means this taking hold of the name of the Anointed One—the resurrection name—the name of Him of whom John, when describing the Millennial reign, says twice over: "And they lived and reigned with CHRIST a thousand years"? (REV. xx, 4-6).

How much we lose by not carefully attending to the dispensational titles which belong to our Lord. What light is thrown by this incident upon the testimony of Peter given on the day of Pentecost concerning Christ's coming glory! These are His words: "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh he would raise up CHRIST to sit on his throne: he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of CHRIST" (ACTS ii, 29-31).

Now if one thing can be more certain than another, it is that CHRIST has not yet occupied the throne of David. The house of Israel has never yet acknowledged Christ as king, neither has He reigned over them. To spiritualise or explain away the application of this promise, secured by the oath of God, in such a way as to destroy its obvious and definite import, is to tear in pieces the sublime truth of God's dispensational purposes.

Let it be remembered that the Apostle James, in the first council held by the Church at Jerusalem, accentuates this great fact. Paul and Barnabas declared to the multitude what miracles and wonders God had wrought

among the Gentiles by them. Their successes, however, were not without qualification. They were expelled with violence from Antioch, in great tumult at Iconium, despitefully used, persecuted, and threatened with stoning, they fled to Derbe and Lystra in Lycaonia (ACTS xiii, 50).

All but objects of idolatrous worship in Lystra, the disciples began to know something of the violent opposition and rejection which the Lord had declared would attend their work. Scarcely able at one point to restrain the noisy populace from sacrificing to them, the arrival of certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium was sufficient to turn the applauding voice of the crowd into that of demand for their death (ch. xiv, 13-15). We read: "And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and having stoned Paul, they drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead. Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up and came into the city, and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. Thence they returned again to Lystra, and Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God (ACTS xiv, 19-22; *see* also verses 1-7).

By reason of such experiences, we can well understand why, when Paul and Barnabas held their peace, James answered, saying: "Men and brethren, hearken unto me. Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to *take out* of them a people for His name; and to this agree the words of the prophet, as it is written:

"After this, I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, which DOETH ALL THESE THINGS. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world" (ACTS xv, 13-18).

The evangelistic experiences of Paul and Barnabas, and the testimony of James, the Lord's brother, who at this time was the chief pastor in Jerusalem, entirely accords with our Lord's words: "Remember the word that I said unto you: the servant is not above his Lord; if they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also" (JOHN xv, 20). These early experiences of the Apostles confirm the prophetic testimonies of the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of Matthew; and emphasize the fact, clearly revealed in those chapters, that there would be no widespread extension of the kingdom of God, even in a spiritual sense, prior to the return of the Lord's Christ.

Full of suggestive interest is the expression of James, that "at the first, God did visit the Gentiles, to *take out* of them a people for His name." Is not this the equivalent of that which the history of the Church teaches? Face to face with the wonderful and previously hidden truth that the mystery of the body of Christ, composed of Jew and Gentile, was to be formed, manifested, and completed, we see the reason for the prominence which is certainly given during this age to the plainly revealed doctrine of election (*see* 2 Peter, 1-12).

Take, for example, the Epistle to the Ephesians. Here the doctrine of election, and the kindred truth of the Body of Christ, is specially made known. This, be it noted, is a Gentile epistle, addressed to one of the seven Churches in Asia. Not to weaken in the least the clearly revealed doctrine of election from the standpoint of the divine sovereignty, do I suggest that one great reason for the strong statements concerning election in this letter was to combat the view, tenaciously held by the Jews, that they, by virtue of their descent from Abraham, were the "elect of God." The Apostle takes far higher ground, and much earlier date, when he affirms that these Gentile believers, united by faith to the Lord Jesus, "were chosen," not in Abraham in time, but "in Christ before the foundation of the world" (EPHES. i, 3-6; ii, 12-22; iii, 3-11).

It cannot be questioned that Israel as a people knew little or nothing concerning the "times of the Gentiles," or the time of the manifestation of "the mystery of the Church, which is His body." This great interval, the time of the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, has been well named "the parenthesis of God." Paul speaks of "the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God"; and declares the purpose of the revelation by God in these words: "To the intent that now, unto the principalities, and powers, in the heavenly places, might be known through the Church the manifold wisdom of God" (EPHES. iii, 8, 10). How remarkable this testimony! It is not the men of the world who are here instructed concerning the glory of the body of Christ, but "the principalities and powers in the heavenlies."

Carefully observe the Apostle's words: "The taking out of the Gentiles of a people for His name." Whose name? Certainly the name of Christ. Hence the royal name, Christian. This name, divinely given to the disciples at the first, James refers to, when he says: "Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by which ye are called" (JAS. ii, 7). Peter also: "But if any of you suffer as a *Christian*, let him not be ashamed" (1 PET. iv, 16). So king Agrippa, who would not be likely to use an unfamiliar name: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (ACTS xxvi, 28).

It is worthy of special notice that "The disciples were *called Christians* first in Antioch" (ACTS xi, 26). The Greek word *(Kreematizo)* here translated *called Christians*, occurs eight times in the New Testament. In each case it predicates divine action, *e.g.*, Noah *being warned of God* (HEB. xi, 6); Simeon, concerning our Lord: "It was *revealed* unto him by the Holy Ghost" (LUKE ii, 26); Joseph, "And *being warned of God* in a dream" (MATT. ii, 12-22); Cornelius, "*was warned from God* by an holy angel" (ACTS x, 22). The dwellers in Antioch probably used the word Christian as a nickname, or term of reproach. There can be no question, however, that this name was first of all given by God Himself.

To apply the name Christian indiscriminately, whether to nations or individuals, is unscriptural and misleading. This name can only belong to those who are "begotten of God with the word of truth," those who have been made "partakers of the DIVINE NATURE" (2 PET. i, 3, 4),

and who in the obedience of faith have been baptised into His name (GAL. iii, 25, 26). Hence the force and great importance of our Lord's words to Nicodemus: "Ye must be born again," and "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (JOHN iii, 3, 5). These are they to whom James referred, who are taken out from among the Gentiles for His name. It is worthy of special notice that in 1 COR. xii, 12, the members of the Body of Christ are spoken of as "the Christ" (*Greek "Kristos"*).

Government may represent, but in the persons of its executive it cannot comprehend, the governed. The election of a minority from among the Gentiles, in view of the coming Kingdom of Christ, is a necessary factor in the case. It is a part of the nature of things. Government in the United Kingdom means the election of less than seven hundred men as members to the House of Commons. The rest are not thereby reprobated. "Many are called but few chosen," is a fact which specially pertains to this age. How can it, or why should it be otherwise? If an election by the people, in order to government by an executive, be right and just, why should the will of God, in order to righteousness, be adjudged unjust and wrong? The heirs of God, the kings who are to reign with Christ over the whole earth, are by the Holy Ghost being prepared for the Millennial glory. The Body of Christ is in process of fashioning. When the members are complete, the purpose of God in regard to the continuance of this age will be fulfilled.

It is the Lord Jesus Christ whom God hath highly

exalted, and given a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (PHIL. ii, 10, 11). The Eternal God has never intended the exaltation of the sinner. His nature should sooner change than this result be seen. How clearly Paul shews that the purpose of God is, that when the number of the children of God, which forms the body of Christ is complete, heirship gives place to the reign which follows. These are his words: "And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together"; and again: "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him" (2 TIM. ii, 12).

With the eye of his mind upon the manifestation of the Sons of God, who will be like Christ, and reign with Him on earth, and share the glory of His bodily appearance, well might the Apostle add: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (ROM. viii, 17, 18; REV. v, 10).

What candid mind can fail to be struck with the Lord's words to His disciples: "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me: that ye may eat and drink at my table, in my kingdom; and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (LUKE xxii, 28-30). Can it be pretended that this promise has been fulfilled? With the testimony concerning Israel's reinstation as the leading nation of the earth, can it be

doubted that it will be? Instructed by the Apostle concerning the rebuilding of the ruins of the tabernacle of David, when the Lord returns, is it not evident that it shall be? (Acts xv, 15-17).

The welcome light, poured forth from the pages of inspiration, will aid us to understand why the Apostle James, guided by the Holy Spirit, called the attention of the great Council at Jerusalem to the conclusive word of the prophet: "After this, I will return and I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up, that the residue of men might seek unto the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, Who doeth all these things" (Amos ix, 11, 12).

Now, in the light of these words, may I not ask my reader to observe the immense importance of an intelligent regard for dispensational truth? Did James ignore the aid of the prophetic Scriptures? But for the light of prophecy, shining clearly for the Church's guidance and instruction, the Assembly at Jerusalem might have broken up disheartened and divided. Instead of this, the assuring words concerning the Divine purpose shewed that the return of the Lord must precede the conversion of the world; that the taking out of a people for His name must precede His coming to reign; that the house of David awaited His rebuilding; that its ruins would continue until the King Himself should set it up (Acts xv, 13-18).

A Millennium without Christ never entered the mind of the Council at Jerusalem; a kingdom without the King

—the glory of His people Israel in the absence of the King of Glory? Nay, verily. For such an unscriptural view the cold materialism of a highly civilised world was necessary, a sceptical and rationalised Christendom essential.

That time has definitely come. Now that the inspiration of the Scriptures is impugned, miracle derided, atonement denied, the efficacy of prayer ignored, the resurrection of our Lord no longer regarded by many as a fundamental truth, the theory of evolution purposely advocated in order to ignore the claims and authority of the Almighty Creator, we may lift up our heads knowing that the last days of a wicked and adulterous age are come.

It is no wonder that the Spirit of Truth has recorded these tremendous words: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be also false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (2 PET. ii, 1, 2). I notice that the R.V. says that these false teachers bring in "sects of perdition." The fearful lengths to which we have come in the denial of the truth of God in these last days may be gathered from the awful fact that many of these false teachers, who by their destructive heresies form "sects of perdition," are regarded as the foremost men of light and leading, the stars and deliverers of the Church of the future. Of such it is written: "Wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever" (JUDE xiii).

CHAPTER XV.

HUMAN HISTORY IN THE KING'S ABSENCE.

"Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel: for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away" (HOSEA iv, 1-3).

"I will go and return to My place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek My face: in their affliction they will seek Me early" (HOSEA v, 15).

"In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (JUDGES xxi, 25).

"Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes. For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the Lord your God giveth you" (DEUTERONOMY xii, 8, 9).

"For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days" (HOSEA iii, 4, 5).

"For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; He will save us" (ISAIAH xxxiii, 22).

WITHOUT A CLOUD BETWEEN.

"For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face" (1 Cor. xiii, 12).

"Without a cloud between;"
To see Him face to face;
Not struck with dire amazement dumb,
But triumphing in grace.

"Without a cloud between;"
To see Him "as He is:"
Oh, who can tell the height of joy—
The full, transporting bliss!

"Without a cloud between;"
My longing spirit waits,
For that sweet hour from which my soul
Its highest glory dates.

"Without a cloud between;"
How changed will all appear!
How different from the earthly path—
Our sad experience here.

"Without a cloud between;"
Lord Jesus, haste the day—
The morning bright, without a cloud,
And chase our tears away.

A. Midlane.

CHAPTER XV.

HUMAN HISTORY IN THE KING'S ABSENCE.

LET it not be supposed that the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ involves the abnegation of His royal claims. True, His sovereignty remains in abeyance, but that is quite another question. There can be no doubt that the teaching of the thirteenth of Matthew is designed to give a prophetic sketch of human experience during the time of the Lord's absence. The subject matter is not authoritative, neither is it in any sense indicative that the course of human history therein predicted at all harmonizes with the divine will.

It is the Lord's testimony concerning the confusion into which humanity would be precipitated by the crime which the men of this world committed, who, having seen God's Sovereign, not only despised and rejected, but actually slew Him.

The insufficiency and failure of moral influence in order to the righteousness of man upon the earth is the underlying thought presented in the structure of the thirteenth of Matthew. It is the rejected King's prophecy, given in parable, of the conditions which would prevail during His absence. We must bear in mind that the kingly character of our Lord has, until the end of the age, given place to the work and mission of the SON OF MAN. We are sure that the structure of this prophecy concerning "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" (*i.e.*, during this present dispensation) will agree with, and cannot contradict the plan and purpose of God.

Standing at a point on the stream of time when the Lord's prophecy has largely become history, we can have no question as to the meaning or application of this remarkable Scripture. The whole chapter, with its seven parables, concerns what our Lord Himself calls "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." Its teachings are limited to the time of the Lord's absence. There is no allusion to the King throughout; and excepting the testimony concerning the judicial action of God in regard to Israel, contained in verses 10-17, no reference whatever either to Israel or Judah. During the time of the King's absence the kingdom is in abeyance, Israel is broken off. It is important at this juncture to read the Apostle's testimony concerning Israel found in ROM. xi. That chapter clearly accentuates that which is here finding expression.

Natural order and sequence prevail throughout. All is in harmony with the moral force of truth. Man is dealt with by God as an accountable being; his responsibility in regard

to the truth which he hears and the character which he fashions are the governing thoughts. The time is the *time* of the divine command to repent and believe the gospel which the SON OF MAN has brought, and still presents to the world. It is the season of seeding on the part of the great Husbandman, in view of the harvest at the end of the age. There is no reference to the Millennium or the throne. In a series of parables we have the great Prophet's teaching concerning the rise, progress and fruition, which comes from the preaching of the Gospel.

Before proceeding to a brief analysis of these parables, we call attention to the meaning of the term, "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." The expression does not imply anything which is unreasonable, or impossible to find out. It is the veiling which is incidental to our imperfect knowledge of God's purposes, thoughts, and working. As the details of an elaborate machine would be mysterious and difficult to those who know but little of the workman's design, or method of construction; so also the mysteries of the kingdom cannot be discerned by the unbelieving or by the superficial reader or thinker.

The intention of the Lord was evidently twofold. He designed concealment to Israel, and revelation to His disciples. Like the pillar of fire, which was darkness to the Egyptians, but light and defence to Israel, the Lord's testimony was as dense darkness to the Jewish house, but instruction and illumination to those who believed on His name. It is an awful thing to be delivered over to judicial blindness. This fatal goal the Jewish house had reached.

We emphasize this statement, because many have been stumbled by reading this testimony of our Lord (which belongs to Israel) as though it pertained to themselves. These are the words of the rejected King, answering the enquiry: "Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?" Our Lord replied: "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore I speak unto them in parables, because they seeing see not: and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith: By hearing, ye shall hear, and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive. For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. Verily I say unto you that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them" (verses 10-17).

This remarkable passage is so apposite that I have quoted it *in extenso*. It will be seen that the testimony applies to the Jewish house, and was addressed as a judicial sentence to Israel, by the rejected King. Of course I am not teaching that blindness of heart may not

be known by those who reject Christ; I am simply pointing out the proper and legitimate application of these solemn words. Nothing could be more weighty or pregnant with warning to all who hear the Gospel than this word of Christ: "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (JOHN iii, 36).

May we not with advantage ask the pertinent question: Did not our Lord's knowledge of dispensational truth lead him to recognize in His rejection the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy? Our Lord's submission is a powerful argument, not only concerning the divine authority and inspiration of the Word of God, but His personal testimony to the fact that "the Scripture cannot be broken?"

Another important thought identified with the expression: "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," is the allusion to things about to be revealed which in the past had (to use a striking expression of the Apostle Paul's) "been HID in God" (EPHES. iii, 9). Certainly one of the most prominent and wonderful of these mysteries during the King's absence has been and is the fashioning of the Church, which is His body. To this great mystery we shall have occasion again to refer, and therefore need not add more at this point. We call attention to the fact that the Greek word *musterion*, translated mystery, is used twenty-seven times in the New Testament. It evidently means that which is obscure, secret, difficult to comprehend and find out. It has, in various places in the Word of God, special reference to that which is spiritual and supernatural. Hence we have such expressions as "the mystery of God," "the mystery of Christ,"

"the mystery of godliness," "the mystery of the body," and "the mystery of iniquity."

Before proceeding to a brief exposition of these parables, I would add that I regard the term "mystery" as having special application to each parable. *The parable of the sower* gives the mystery of the working of the incorruptible seed, the living word Christ, in the personal communication of His own life, in order to possession of and participation in His divine nature. *The parable of the wheat and the tares* shews the mystery of the Divine and Satanic energies working in direct opposition and vital conflict right on to the end of the age. *The parable of the mustard seed* reveals the remarkable progress of the Kingdom from a very small beginning, and shews the mystery of its professed acceptance by the world, not as a spiritual institution, but as one adapted to the growth of moral and social questions, and the advancement of the interests of civilisation. Kings, governments, and men willingly receive Christ's doctrine thus far. They use His principles, however, as condiments, rather than as the bread of personal and national life. Perchance our Lord chose the mustard tree to illustrate how little of His intense doctrine they would use. *The parable of the leaven* declares the mystery of the subtle and deceitful infusion of false doctrine and teaching into the pure meal (the doctrine of Christ). Evidently John not only saw, but was directly instructed of God concerning this woman, in her avocation of ecclesiastical deceit. He writes: "The mystery of the woman which thou sawest" (Rev. xvii, 18). *The parable of the hidden treasure* bespeaks the mystery

of Christ concerning treasure hid in the world, to secure which He "emptied Himself of His glory," and bought the field. *The parable of the pearl of great price* shews the mystery of the one body, His Church, which Christ hath found — His priceless and unique possession. *The parable of the draw net* makes known the mystery of the compulsory close of the age effected by direct Divine intervention—the earth's harvest and separation, when the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven give place to the manifestation of the King with His Church, in order to His sovereignty in great glory and universal power over the whole earth.

It is necessary to bear in mind that, pending the arrival of the times of the Sovereignty of Christ, the divine activity must have reference to the natural condition and tendency of man. With great reverence I affirm, that God could not leave out of view the fact that man finds pleasure in sin, and yields himself to its service. He constantly desires to do that which is in direct opposition to the divine will. God's moral government is obnoxious to the tastes and appetites of sinful men and women. An impassable gulf exists between animalism and godliness, between sensuality and spirituality. These forces, happily, are essentially antagonistic The present condition of the world, taken for all in all, is that which is best suited to man's character as a sinner. It is the utmost which God could do for a world in which iniquity abounds.

The intense heat and cold, the inhospitable nature of large portions of the earth's surface, the tempests

of ocean, the indisposition of the earth to yield her strength, resources, and fruition, except at the price of hard work and close research (and a large proportion of failure even then), arises from the fact of man being a transgressor. Sinners cannot bear prosperity; they ought not to have it. They must go to the devil, even as the righteous gravitate to God. Sin abounds, therefore deformity, disease, and ugliness abound. Here is the secret of inclement seasons, broken summers, changed fortunes, broken hearts, and lost lives. Longevity would be positively unbearable in a world where the great majority of men strengthen in wickedness as years increase. As it is, very few men are regenerated after they reach fifty. The fact is, sin and death are synonyms; so, also, iniquity and ugliness. Transgression and deformity are first cousins. The violation of God's law, and the vast proportion of disease which exists, mean simply cause and effect. It is an unspeakable mercy that the great majority of the ungodly die early. Their "sin finds them out," and slays them. If they could escape the penalties of transgression it would be a premium placed upon their commission of iniquity.

Perhaps some of my readers will startle if I affirm that we could not, in this age, bear with many handsome men, and fair and beautiful women. Multitudes of maidens are selected for shame and sin, because they are fair. They would probably have escaped shame had their features been otherwise. Anomalous though it may seem, absence of beauty has conserved the moral interests

of the world. Deformity, however, is not of God. The Divine Being is identified with the "beauty of holiness." This is one of the titles which pertain to the Blessed God. The world is trying its hardest to hinder sin destroying beauty, but without success. In vain do men and women attempt to make up for the absence of beauty by the additions of jewellery and the embellishments of dress, whilst their character is corrupt. Surely the devil must laugh to see men and women essaying "good form," as it is called, correct judgment in dress and manners, whilst at the same time their character is depraved. It is difficult to describe the concentration of hypocrisy which these embody: dress beautiful, moral character hateful. This is the *cant* the world indulges in. Now those who know what society is in 1886 will admit how shamefully corrupt it is.

Just at this time we are shocked by the fearful moral failure of prominent public men. In my judgment immorality has done far more to destroy confidence in certain Liberal leaders than their sympathy with Home Rule. Facts which have come to my knowledge are so appalling and repulsive that I dare not write them. Terrible though it is, I know some in high places so utterly lost to righteousness and goodness that if their decease was chronicled we might breathe more freely, and recognise that our politics, commerce, and country had escaped terrible danger. I speak that *I know*, and write with restraint, despite the strength of my language.

Not to enlarge unduly, I remind my readers that all this, and a thousand times more, which we know has

been common to human society right through in this dark and evil age, had to be taken into account by our Lord in dealing with men during the time of His absence. This accounts for the remarkable construction of the parables themselves. In a very real sense, they are original and unique. How any intelligent thinker, unless his judgment is biassed by (that brick wall) prejudice, can fail to see how the parables of the Sower, the wheat and tares, the mustard-seed and the leaven have been fulfilled in the individual and national experience of Christendom, during the past nineteen centuries, I am at a loss to know. It is time, however, we proceeded with a brief exposition of the parables themselves.

BE TRUE.

"Thou must be true thyself,
If thou the truth wouldst teach.
Thy soul must overflow, if thou
Another's soul wouldst reach:
It needs the overflow of heart
To give the lips full speech.

Think truly, and thy thoughts
Shall the world's famine feed;
Speak truly, and each word of thine
Shall be a fruitful seed;
Live truly, and thy life shall be
A great and noble creed."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER OF MATTHEW.

PART I.—THE SOWER, AND THE WHEAT AND TARES.

THE SOWER.

"And He spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow: And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way-side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and, because they had no root, they withered away: And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way-side. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it: Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty." (MATT. xiii, 3-9, 18-23.)

THE WHEAT AND TARES.

"Another parable put He forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field; But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto to him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest, while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn. Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house; and His disciples came unto Him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." (MATT. xiii, 24-30, 36-43.)

CHAPTER XVI.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER OF MATTHEW.

PART I.—THE SOWER, AND THE WHEAT AND TARES.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER declares the mystery of the working of the divine seed. Christ Himself is the Sower; His word the seed, generously sown in the ground of the hearts of men. The seed is incorruptible—the life eternal. The living seed of God is Christ, His character and work. It is not possible to separate the word spoken by Christ from the word of God which He is (*see* HEB. iv, 12-14). As the SON OF MAN, He sows the seed whereby the eternal life is begotten.

This life is not mere continuity of being, which condition is common to all men. Samuel Drew, writing concerning the immortality of the soul, has well said: "If immaterial, the soul must be immortal, because it

cannot perish either from outward violence or from internal tendency to decay." Eternal life, however, is nothing less and nothing beside the possession of the SON OF GOD. The Lord is the corn of wheat from heaven, whose multiplied life makes up the harvest of the Church which is His body (JOHN xii, 24).

Spiritual individualism, an idea common among men, is not known to the word of God. Christ is the vine, His disciples the branches (JOHN xv, 5). This figure gives a corporate, not a separate life. So, also, believers are members of His Body, living stones in the holy temple which is being builded for the habitation of God (EPHES. ii, 21, 22). These expressions have nothing in common with an independent personal spiritual existence. Hence it is written "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not the life" (1 JOHN v, 12). The parable of the Sower puts mere morality out of court. Man's natural condition, however good or excellent it may be considered, is not in the question. As well affirm that a clean and prepared field without seed has within itself capability for harvest, as to assert that eternal life is a possibility to any man unless he receives Christ and is begotten with the word of truth (JAS. i, 18). Peter, following in the track of the Divine Sower, writes: "Being born again, not of corruptible SEED, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 PET. i, 23).

The work of the SON OF MAN as the Sower during this age is not only remedial. The Gospel of Christ is not a system of morals, neither an attempt to bring man back

to the state which Adam's unfallen condition suggests. The intention of the Blessed God is thus described: "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto *eternal life*, by Jesus Christ our Lord (ROM. v, 20-21).

The life which each believer in Christ possesses is, in its nature far above that which Adam forfeited by sin. The life of Christ is as much superior to the Adamic life as the Lord Jesus is superior to the federal head of the human race. The highest form of life which we know—say, for example, man's—is not so far above the lowest forms of life on the earth, for instance, that of a worm, as those who are partakers of the divine nature are exalted and rise above the human.

This great truth is well expressed by the Apostle when he says: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 JOHN iii, 1). He is compelled to acknowledge his utter inability to reveal, in word or thought, what this involves; he therefore adds: "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." Certainly this is the fact. He continues: "We know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him;" but who has either brain or heart to tell what this expression involves? The truth is that we await the exposition of God which the time of the manifestation of the sons of God shall reveal.

The mystery of the kingdom of heaven throughout this age is the world-wide presentation of the blessed Gospel of Christ in order to the salvation of men, and

the calling, quickening, and justifying of the august company of the heirs of God and the joint-heirs with Christ. Hence the testimony: "He came unto His own, but His own (Israel) received Him not; but to as many as received Him, to them gave He power (right or privilege) to become the sons of God, even to them which believe on His name: which were born, not of *blood*, nor of the will of the *flesh*, nor of the will of *man*, but of GOD" (JOHN i, 11-13).

Nor this only—now is the time of the free proclamation of the mercy of God to the world. *Now* is made known on the authority of the SON OF MAN, that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." Now is declared the truth that "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (JOHN iii, 16, 17). Now has come the time of the revelation of His grace, the dawn of the morning of the great day of salvation, which has already lasted nearly nineteen centuries (2 COR. vi, 2).

Everywhere let it be known that this is the Father's will, that "every one which seeth the Son and believeth on Him may have everlasting life" (JOHN vi, 40); that "the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men" (TIT. ii, 11); that by virtue of His death—the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world—the message of divine forgiveness of sin is proclaimed: "Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all who believe are justified

from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses" (ACTS xiii, 37, 38).

Was there ever such testimony? O Thou blessed SON OF MAN! How shall we fittingly herald Thy glory as the Sower? Welcome, thrice welcome, Thou rejected one! Oh, mystery of love! Oh, wonderful grace! Thou bountiful Sower: scattering freely Thy precious seed in the heart of the sons of men. What! wilt thou sow such seed on the *rock*, by the *way side*, among *thorns*, on good ground, anywhere, everywhere? The wide, wide world Thy field, every creature Thine acreage? Verily Thou art already rewarded, infinitely blessed SON OF MAN. Freed now from Israel's rejection and littleness, how beautiful upon the mountains are Thy feet, bringing good tidings of salvation, publishing peace. Surely, Israel might see in Thy ministry a prophecy of their coming glory (ISA. lii, 7-9).

That there should be much apparent failure in the work of the Sower is a matter for sorrow, not for surprise. Men do not believe in God. The truth of Christ can be rejected and despised. They will not come unto Christ, that they might have life. Like Esau, they are ready to sell their portion for a morsel of meat. They ask contemptuously: "What good will this birthright do me?' I know how heart-breaking it is to note the three-fourths failure which is here indicated. There is another side however, to this, and that is the munificence and prodigality indicated by the prolific sowing by the SON OF MAN. "Some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundredfold" shall shew a glorious yield in the day of harvest.

THE PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND THE TARES makes kown the mystery of the Divine and Satanic energies working in direct opposition and vital conflict, right on to the end of the Age. And what a mystery is this long-continued toleration of Satanic agency, an agency which we know, ere long, is to be restrained and bound for a thousand years, and then ended. Why does the Lord permit the prospects of the goodly harvest to be jeopardized? Why, whilst men sleep, is the enemy allowed to sow tares? The Keeper of Israel doth not need sleep, neither is He weary. Wherefore His non-interference at this critical juncture? The servants ask: "Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field; from whence then hath it tares?" He replies: "An enemy hath done this!"

But why this powerful enemy? Servants, hearken! Have you forgotten the rejection of the householder and His good seed, and Israel's deliberate choice of the prowling night-fiend with his full bags of tares? Such a choice inevitably carried with it the consequences predicted, and which are as terrible as they are real. Henceforth good and evil shall strive against each other until the harvest. Mark these words: "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." And this also: "For God, who commandeth the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 COR. iv, 4, 5).

Observe the opposing workers! In the same field,

at the same time, in quest of the same men: the one blinding the mind, the other enlightening it; the one hindering the revelation of Christ, the other facilitating His in-shining and coming; the one working on the lines of unbelief, darkness, death, and perdition—the other on the lines of faith, light, life, and glory. How true all this has been in the light of human experience! How true it still is! So also shall it be till the harvest comes. We who have succeeded the servants in the parable know it all well. The strife continues. The developments still go on. The conflict gathers strength.

What is to be done? The servants enquire: "Wilt thou, then, that we go and gather them up? But he said: "*Nay!* lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them; let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest, I will say to the reapers: Gather ye together, first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn: but gather the wheat into my barn" (verses 28-30).

Where, I ask, is there a single word in this solemn testimony which gives the shadow of foundation to the popular theory of a reign of righteousness or Millennial Age prior to the harvest here spoken of?

The parable of the wheat and the tares differs from that of the Sower in many particulars. The Sower deals with principles, and scatters the truth of God in the hearts of men. The wheat and the tares, on the other hand, represent men—men who, having responsibility and opportunity, surrender themselves either to the working of the Holy Spirit or to the energy of the evil spirit, the

devil. The quiet process of truth as a moral force is prominent in the parable of the Sower; the active energies both of the Saviour and the destroyer are to the front in that of the wheat and the tares. Here is the Saviour's gracious working, resulting in wheat for His garner. Here, also, the devil's corrupt sowing, the tares or bastard wheat, which, when the harvest comes, must be rejected, and cast into the fire.

It has been well said that men become either God's wheat through regeneration, or the devil's tares (bastard wheat), by protracted imitation. There can be little doubt that the enmity which the devil bears to the sons of men arises from the fact that he knows perfectly that the close of this age will see his power at an end, his judgment and punishment come. Men redeemed unto God, Satan sees in the glorious position of the sons of resurrection; they *cannot* die; for ever they will live in fellowship with, and complete loyalty to, the Blessed God. This arouses the hatred of the destroyer. Cast down from Heaven by his sin, he knows that it is written that God hath not put in subjection, even to good angels, the age to come; but to man whom, in Christ, He hath highly exalted (HEB. ii, 5-7).

We notice verses 49, 50: "So shall it be in the end of the world (age): the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." The word translated "world" should be rendered "age." In the R.V. it is rendered: "the consummation of the age." The same in MATT.

xxviii, 20: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (the consummation of the age).

In the 50th verse, the Lord emphasizes the certainty of the punishment of the wicked in the furnace of fire. The execution of the sentence, which in this passage appears to take place immediately after the severance of the wicked from the just, gives another illustration of the importance of comparing Scripture with Scripture. Wicked men are not cast into the lake of fire until after the final judgment (REV. xx, 15; xxi, 9). The judgment upon the Antichrist and the false prophet, on the other hand, takes place when our Lord appears. They are cast into a lake of burning fire at the end of this Age, and before the Millennial day dawns (REV. xix, 20).

I cannot close our study without the following: This parable is constantly cited as though our Lord's words gave sanction to mixed and corrupt Church associations. The words of Christ have no reference whatever to the toleration of evil in Christian assemblies. The absence of effective discipline is directly contrary to the revealed will of our Lord. We are commanded to withdraw from those who walk disorderly (EPHES. v, 11; 1 COR. v, 9-13).

The prohibition is directed against the *rooting up* of the tares until our Lord does it, by angelic agency, at the end of the age. We have no business to persecute our fellow men, be they godly or ungodly. The equivalent of the rooting up of the tares is not discipline but *death*. The rooting up is nothing less than violent persecution, unto death. Christ, until the close of this age, is the Saviour, not the *destroyer* of men's lives.

No more hideous caricature, no more shameful misrepresentation of the will and word of Christ, was ever given than the dastardly cruelties committed in the past by the Church of Rome. The horrors of the Inquisition, the black catalogue of more than fifty millions of the saints of God foully murdered by that great whore, who, for centuries hath sat on the seven-hilled city shews the tremendous need which has existed for these resolute words of Christ. No wonder that Jesus Christ, in the Apocalypse, speaks of ecclesiastical Babylon as being "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (REV. xvii, 5, 6).

We have no words, save of strong and burning indignation, for those who persecute for conscience toward God, either Protestant, Romanist, Infidel, or Mahommedan. Neither King, Government, Pope, Church, State, nor individual, has a particle of right to persecute any man,—much less to put him to death. The parable of the wheat and the tares is the protest and solemn prohibition of the SON OF MAN against persecution in any and every form.

The vigorous application of the law against the transgressor, honest contention for the faith in argument, strong and vigorous opposition against conduct, or testimony inimical to right and truth, is perfectly legitimate, and is not in any sense persecution. Righteousness and truth have no platform either for persecution or putting to death.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER OF MATTHEW.

PART II.—THE MUSTARD SEED AND THE LEAVEN.

THE MUSTARD SEED.

"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field. Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof" (MATT. xiii, 31, 32.

"I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace: I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me. Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it. I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven; He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches" (DAN. iv, 4, 5, 10-14).

THE SCRIPTURES CONCERNING LEAVEN.

"Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread ; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses : for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel" (EXODUS xii, 15).

"And if thou bring an oblation of a meat offering baken in the oven, it shall be unleavened cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil. And if thy oblation be a meat offering baken in a pan, it shall be of fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil. Thou shalt part it in pieces, and pour oil thereon : it is a meat offering. And if thy oblation be a meat offering baken in the fryingpan, it shall be made of fine flour with oil. And thou shalt bring the meat offering that is made of these things unto the Lord : and when it is presented unto the priest, he shall bring it unto the altar. And the priest shall take from the meat offering a memorial thereof, and shall burn it upon the altar : it is an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord. And that which is left of the meat offering shall be Aaron's and his sons' ; it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the Lord made by fire. No meat offering, which ye shall bring unto the Lord, shall be made with leaven, for ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the Lord made by fire" (LEVIT. ii, 4-11).

"Another parable spake He unto them : The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened" (MATT. xiii, 33).

"Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread. Which when Jesus perceived, He said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Saducees? Then understood they . . . (MATT. xvi, 6-8, 11, 12).

"Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us : Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness ; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 COR. v, 6-8).

CHAPTER XVII.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER OF MATTHEW.

Part II.—THE MUSTARD SEED AND THE LEAVEN.

THE Parable of the Mustard Seed shews that, despite His personal rejection, the intense and comprehensive doctrine which our Lord brought into the world would produce marvellous results. What growth and development is here! A small seed has become a spreading tree. A few Galilean fishermen have filled Jerusalem with their doctrine, that the rejected King, who was crucified, is risen from the dead, and is now Lord of all. In a short space, and the Apostle James could say to Paul: "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands (myriads, R.V. margin) of Jews there are which believe (Acts xxi, 20).

Further on, and the tree had covered the Roman world.

Still later, and Constantine made it the religion of the State, a thing he never would have done had he been loyal to the revealed will of Christ. The Emperor pursued a course which proved that he knew nothing about the Lord's rejection and the spiritual character of Christ's kingdom during the time of His absence. And what followed this prodigious development? Did Spirituality appear in personal character, or Godliness attach to national life? Let history answer.

When the kingdom of heaven became fashionable, and the world—with its priests and bishops, popes and cardinals, emperors and senators, men who delight in war, and men who have pleasure in peace—all came to church together, they evidently had what the Americans call "a good time." The kingdom grew apace. The fact is it grew *too fast*. Even James, the Lord's brother, who was Bishop in Jerusalem fell into this snare of the devil at that early date. It was of those "many thousands" of Judaized Christians through whom James influenced Paul to have his head shaved, and bear the charges of the four men who had a vow on them, that he had afterwards to write these words: "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your *lusts*. Ye adulterers and adulteresses! Know ye not the friendship of the world is enmity with God" (JAS. iv, 4).

There can be no question that these tremendous words were used concerning the professed Church of Christ, those who affirmed that they were married to the Lord. Otherwise such words could not have been used. So also: "Go to, now, ye rich men, weep and

howl, for your miseries that shall come upon you! Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten; your gold and your silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire" (JAMES v, 1-3). Fairly strong language this, to address to the members of the Church. The translators might well head this drastic letter "The *General* Epistle of James."

How long after Constantine had embraced Christianity, (as it is called) and, through mechanical agency and human sacraments, made the empire Christian, did it take to reach the apostacy of Julian, leading on to the dark ages, and the corrupt power for centuries identified with the Papacy? Well did our Lord say: "The kingdom of heaven (the condition during His absence) is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which, indeed, is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." Has not this corrupt growth been seen? Have we not here clearly revealed the figure of a wide and far-spreading nominal Christianity—a kind of nationally baptized heathenism? For illustration, could we truthfully apply the term *Christian* to England, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, or the United States. If the Lord designed the mustard-tree to represent the growth of the doctrines and principles which pertain to His Holy Word, the symbolism is not appropriate. Did our Lord make court to Cæsar, or admit that His kingdom pertained to this Age? Did not our Lord say: "My

kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world *then would my servants fight*" (JOHN xviii, 36). The Lord was controverting Pilate's misapprehension of the character which will attach to Christ's coming kingdom. Beyond destroying His enemies, when He comes "to put down all rule, authority, and power" there is no fighting. Far from His servants fighting, under His reign the nations learn war no more, the sword becomes the ploughshare. The world which crucified the Lord of glory—shall the bride of Christ have fellowship with it? The Church of Christ is *in* the world, not of it.

The reason why the Church of Christ has so little power in the world to-day arises from her unholy fellowship with the world. She has compromised her position. The Lord designed His Church throughout the whole of this age to be His witness against the world, not to fraternize with it. Instead of taking this place of separation, which, when occupied according to the Divine will, always means power, she has failed to come without the camp and bear His reproach. She has declined to witness against the world: refusing the reproach of Christ she has herself become a reproach.

We have heard it stated that the parable of the mustard-seed shews that Christianity, in course of time, will cover with its spreading power and influence all the kingdoms of the earth. Those who maintain this view are not quite sure whether they cannot even now recognise the eagles of Austria, France, Russia, and the United States amongst the birds lodging in the branches.

They admit that it is imperative to believe that the

birds which tracked the path of the Sower represent Satan, because our Lord explains: "Then cometh the wicked one (the devil), and catcheth away that which was sown in the heart" (verse 19); but the question arises: Hasn't the devil been converted since then, and the ravens become doves? For our part we do not hesitate to affirm that the birds lodging in the branches comprehend the world, the flesh, and the devil, in fairly com fortable quarters in Christendom, and satisfied with their position. It is an astute policy which extracts the merely selfish and worldly side of Christian conservatism. The truth is that the nations like the teachings of Christ just so far as they serve their own ends. If the Lord Jesus Christ would but renounce His divine character and claims, become reasonable, and admit that all He intended as a teacher was the presentation of a code of morals, the keeping of which would further the civilisation, culture, and commercial prosperity of the world, nothing could be better. In view of the rights of property, the safety of life, character, and home, nothing could be more desirable than His suggestions. Thou shalt not steal, kill, bear false witness, or commit adultery?—these precepts of the moral law the world recognises to be most admirable.

But, once for all, there must be a cessation of this everlasting talk about sin, atonement, regeneration, and the worship of God. Men must no longer be treated as children, but left to act as they please. If they choose to gratify their passions and appetites, it is a very natural thing after all, and cannot be more than a very venial

and trifling offence. Then that word must be expunged: "Thou shalt have none other gods before Me" (Ex. xx, 3). That must go.

The fact is, the advancement, progress, and refinement of the age has produced a whole company of cultured *freethinkers* and high-born Agnostics. They are all exceedingly intelligent men—most of them have forgotten more than their fathers ever knew—they are prodigious readers and most profound thinkers. Well, is it reasonable to suppose that men so advanced in learning should know anything about God, or even recognise such a Being? How could they submit their judgments and themselves to the crude testimony of that singular compilation of documents called the Bible? Beside this, should not these great ones be constituted a court of appeal in regard to what is, and what is not true in the Scriptures? Besides, are not the large proportion of these professedly Christians and members of churches. There, my reader, if you cannot see the great mustard tree after what I have stated, I am afraid my volume is to that extent written in vain.

The Parable of the Leaven gives the mystery of the working of an insidious and subtle agent: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened" (ver. 33). Those who believe in the reign of righteousness, brought about by the power of the truth of God and the energy of the Holy Spirit, quote this parable as sustaining their view. I confess I do not understand how this can be. Here is pure meal—the

real and true doctrine of Christ. Our Lord represents a woman hiding leaven in this pure meal,—what illustration can be found in this act which harmonises with the conduct of those who rejoice to bring everything to the light and hold forth the word of life?

The Apostle distinctly says: "Not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully" (2 Cor. iv, 2). Certainly this deceitful handling is precisely what the woman was doing. She stealthily introduced an active and corrupting element into the meal. She did not intend to preserve its purity. Her object was to effect its deterioration and corruption. It is quite probable that this was done to make the bread more palatable: the bread was polluted all the same. There is no more grevious sin than to corrupt the truth. The word of God is generally considered heavy and unpalatable to man's natural appetite. Men forget that it is written: "He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever."

Now the whole Word of God testifies against leaven, and identifies it as an evil and ungodly thing. At the passover, all leaven was to be put out of the houses of the people of Israel (Ex. xii, 15). It was never to have place in the offerings made unto the Lord, save in one case, where it was purposely used to remind the worshipper of his own essentially evil nature (Lev. xxiii, 15). Throughout the New Testament it always represents evil. There is the leaven of Herod, that reynard amongst imperial foxes; the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy (Matt. xvi, 11, 12); the leaven of the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection; there is

the leaven of malice and wickedness, against which believers are specially warned (1 Cor. v, 8).

Then there is the command to purge out the old leaven, which evidently stands for the old thoughts concerning justification before God, on the ground of the deeds of the law. The unleavened bread of sincerity and truth cannot be eaten by those who reject the doctrine of justification through the blood of the Passover Lamb. Hence Paul says: "For even Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast; not with old leaven (the old teaching), neither with the leaven of malice or wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. v, 7, 8)—sincerity in the believer, as opposed to hypocrisy in the Pharisee, and truth in the believer—the truth of the new life obtained through the death and resurrection of Christ—in opposition to the lie of the Sadducee, who by implication denied atonement and the great truth of the resurrection.

Polluted bread is the outcome of the woman's stealthy action, and how that should symbolise the working of Christ's pure testimony and doctrine I cannot understand. It is said that our Lord has a perfect right, if He chooses, to make the working of the leaven in this particular Scripture to stand for good, and not evil. This statement is specious, and, moreover, it does not bear application.

Will it be contended that the pure unleavened bread of God has in a good sense leavened the whole lump? Has the word and doctrine of Christ been maintained in purity in the Roman Catholic Church? Or by the Greek Church? Or in the Church of England—or by any of the

various denominational bodies, in any part of the world? Is the unleavened bread of the truth of God being kneaded, baked, and given out to the people?

I venture to affirm, that instead of one woman, as in the parable, thousands of men and women are industriously engaged in corrupting the truth of God. The Gospel of Christ, His death for our sins, His resurrection from the dead (1 Cor. xiii, 3, 4), is counted contemptible; and if the preacher cannot place polluted bread on the table, he is often described as behind the age. This applies with equal, if not greater, force to a large proportion of the matter written for the religious press. These statements, I am aware, will not be popular. They are true, nevertheless. As in the days of Malachi, so in this day, the God of heaven may be heard saying: "Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar, and ye say wherein have we polluted Thee? In that ye say the table of the Lord is contemptible." As of old they said: Our souls loathed this light bread, so also in these days of a vitiated spiritual taste.

In my judgment a subordinate thought in this parable is, that the energetic principle of Christ's word and doctrine finds illustration in the permeating nature of leaven. This, however, does not denote quality, but activity. In this sense I see the reception of Christ's truth to be a savour of life unto life, the rejection of His Word the savour of death unto death (2 Cor. ii, 14, 15). It is simply astonishing how the active working of Christ's doctrine has gone out to the ends of the earth. Men are permeated and interpenetrated with our Lord's testimony, in a thousand ways, either for weal or woe. The aged

Simeon uttered a pregnant sentence when he said of the infant Jesus: "Behold! this child is set for the rise and fall of many in Israel" (LUKE ii, 34).

Men who forsake the word of God must get their material for bread in forbidden harvest fields. Under the law, the presence-bread of the Holy Place was always prepared from fine flour. Upon no pretext whatever might the materials be changed. Fine flour, well kneaded, freshly baked, was brought into the sanctuary each Sabbath morning. Such was the divine law, such the practice of the priests. It was not with them a question of the desire of the congregation. The question was not one of pandering to the corrupted appetites of the people, but of presenting the pure bread which would be acceptable to God. (LEV. xxiv, 5-9).

I frankly and joyously admit that thousands of the Lord's people are not only jealous of the purity of the meal, but are active in its dissemination everywhere. The devil is very busy, but he is not supreme. There is but One Who is almighty, and of His true Church it is written: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." There is nothing hopeless in the testimony of our Lord. The day hasteth.

As an illustration of the ignorance which comes through forsaking the careful study of the Word of God, I recall the following, which I heard from the lips of a leading American preacher. Dealing deceitfully with the Scriptures (indeed, the preacher might have descended from the woman in the parable), he said: "I could defend slavery and polygamy from the Scriptures."

This statement was received by the large congregation as a proof of his ability. I defy that gentleman to maintain that position. The tactics are very simple in dealing with this kind of sophistry. The living God said in relation to the creation of man: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have *dominion* over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over the whole earth" (GEN. i, 26).

This is the divine testimony. God made man to have dominion over the whole earth; then He did not make him to be a slave. Dominion and slavery represent distinctly opposite conditions. God declares that He formed man to have dominion; therefore slavery had no place or part in the divine intention. Slavery came of man's lust, cruelty, and ungodliness. To affirm that polygamy can be defended from the Word of God—is utterly false. Asked how it was that Moses suffered the children of Israel to put away their wives for other causes than that of adultery, our Lord, after clearly stating the divine law that God made man male and female, so that, joined together, the twain should be one flesh, added: "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives, but from *the beginning* it was not so." (MATT. xix, 7, 8).

Because Moses, in dealing with a stiff-necked and rebellious race, suffered this ungodly act; this distinguished preacher said, forsooth, polygamy could be defended. Our Lord's words are: "And they twain shall be one flesh." More than two is not one flesh. Three or four is confusion, and tells of a condition which is in direct opposition to the will of God. Those who occupy

such positions are living in a state which is outside the will of God, and our Lord's testimony is the conclusive proof. Does it follow that the sufferance of Moses revoked, repealed, or set aside the law of God? Why did not this eloquent preacher inform his crowded congregation that he was throwing sophistical dust in their eyes? If the mind of the Lord is to be known on these subjects, we must go to the beginning, where the divine will is made known. Less than four years since, and by reason of atrocious crimes committed in Ireland, the Crimes Bill for that country was passed. Is the quality and character of the empire's legislation to be interpreted in the light of that measure?

If any of my readers require a normal sample of the quality of the water of the Thames, I suggest they had better not go below Barking, where the drainage of London enters the river. If they desire its real quality, I counsel them to go up stream toward the Cotswolds, where the river takes its rise. In like manner, if men wish to know what the will of God is in regard to polygamy, divorce, and slavery, allow me to suggest that instead of going down stream to Moses, after two thousand five hundred years of man's rebellion and degeneration; they go up stream to God.

"From *the beginning* it was not so," is a double-edged sword, which cuts in pieces a hundred of these miserable sophistries. In truth, you have only carefully to analyse the utterances of many men, to find out that they do not study the Scriptures, and also that they are adepts in leavening the pure meal of God's Word.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER OF MATTHEW.

PART III.—THE HID TREASURE, THE PEARL, AND THE DRAW-NET.

"Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it" (MATT. xiii, 46).

"How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (EPHES. iii, 3-11).

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it" (MATT. xiii, 45, 46).

CLASPING OF HANDS.

Lord, thou art mine, and I am thine,
If mine I am : and thine much more,
Then I or ought, or can be mine.
Yet to be thine, doth me restore ;
So that again I now am mine,
And with advantage mine the more.
Since this being mine, brings with it thine,
And thou with me dost thee restore.
If I without thee would be mine,
I neither should be mine nor thine.

Lord, I am thine, and thou art mine :
So mine thou art, that something more
I may presume thee mine, then thine.
For thou didst suffer to restore
Not thee, but me, and to be mine :
And with advantage mine the more,
Since thou in death wast none of thine,
Yet then as mine didst me restore.
O be mine still ! still make me thine !
Or rather make no Thine and Mine !

HERBERT.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER OF MATTHEW.

PART III.—THE HID TREASURE, THE PEARL AND THE DRAW-NET.

THE PARABLE OF THE TREASURE HID IN THE FIELD. At this point in our exposition we touch an interesting fact. Verily, we need to watch the incidents which abound in the way of the blessed SON OF MAN, as to hearken carefully to His Words. In the 36th verse we read: "Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house; and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field."

"Into the house." How suggestive! Away from the multitude to the quiet company of His own disciples. Face to face with His loved ones, whom He has called, is bearing with, teaching, and saving, may we not anticipate a change

in the character of His testimony? Will it be so? Are home and family secrets to be disclosed in the house? Let us quietly sit at His blessed feet and listen; perchance His lips will drop as the sweet-smelling myrrh.

The devil was in the track of the Sower, catching away the precious seed; the prince of darkness was in the field scattering tares. He was no stranger to the branches of the mustard tree, and, though hidden, he was secretly active in the leaven. Will he choose to keep outside, now that the Lord has entered into the house? We have heard his voice ere this, saying: "Send us away;" possibly we are now in a sphere of divine activity and working into which the subtlety of the tempter cannot come.

Hearken! The SON OF MAN speaks: "Again, The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field, the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field" (verse 44). What a change of figure is here! How different the whole scene! Are we right in saying that already our blessed Lord is disclosing to His disciples His perception of the exceeding value, in His estimation, of the treasure hidden in the field?

Evidently, the MAN of this parable is the Lord. Just that; how simple! how appropriate! God's Man; the Blessed Man; the Man whom the world wonders at; the Man who encompasseth God; the Second Man, the Lord from heaven. We, too, exclaim, "*Ecce Homo!*" Behold the Man!

The field, what is that? The world; the Cosmos; the fair beautiful earth, as He had seen it when it sprang

from His creative hand, so bright and beautiful that, beholding it, the morning stars sang of His matchless creative skill. How cursed and blighted by sin! How changed! How altered all! and yet, THE MAN valued it. Had not His holy Father sent Him into the world, "not to condemn the world, but that THE WORLD THROUGH HIM MIGHT BE SAVED"? (JOHN iii, 17). What therefore must have been HIS *estimate* of its value? Already MEN were being saved through faith in HIS NAME. The deliverance of the world should as certainly follow.

How "the Man Christ Jesus," the Man on the Cross, and the Man in the glory hath hidden His knowledge of the treasure, and His purpose in regard to the purchase of the field. Surely He Himself hath been hidden in promise, prophecy, and type; in fire and cloud; in tabernacle and temple; in priest and sacrifice; in word and work; in humiliation and sorrow; in poverty and homelessness; in sprinkled blood and loaded altar; in bread and wine; in life, and death, and sepulchre. Lord Jesus, Thou art the parable of parables, veiled and yet, from "behind the lattice" of Thy word, shewing Thyself, until the price of purchase hath been paid. SON OF MAN, has Thy hiding involved the expenditure of Thy glory, Thyself the great price paid down? Then the world is thine indeed. Well hast Thou spoken: "The world is mine and the fulness thereof" (PSALM lx, 12).

It is deeply interesting to ponder the meaning of the word "treasure." What treasure? Can we doubt that, in a very special sense, Israel hath place? "For the Lord hath chosen Jacob for Himself, and

Israel for His PECULIAR TREASURE" (Ps. cxxxv, 4). The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold; the people of whom God hath said: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptian, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant then ye shall be a PECULIAR TREASURE unto me, above all people, for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel" (Ex. xix, 4-6).

Surely the light is streaming from Him who hath come to make known the Father's will. We can better understand why Moses, speaking for the blessed God, in anticipation of Israel's future glory, should break out and sing: "Give ear, O heavens! and I will speak; and hear, O earth! the words of my mouth: my doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew; for the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness He led him about; He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye."

Despite Israel's sin and rebellion the Eternal God continued to them His everlasting love. Even when solemn judgment came upon them, His yearning heart could say: "Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their LATTER END. How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except that their rock had sold them and the Lord had shut them up" (DEUT. xxxii, 9,

10; 28-31). "Even then it shall be written: Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my *treasures*" (v. 34). Oh, that marvellous record of Moses in DEUT. xxxii—what a prophecy of the history of Israel it contains! And what an outburst of THEIR LATTER END GLORY is contained in these words! "Happy art thou, O Israel! Who is like unto you, O people, saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and Who is the sword of thine excellency? Verily, the Eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (DEUT. xxxiii, 27-29).

Yes, this *man*, the great antitype of Joseph, hidden from the knowledge of his brethren who had sold him, who had charge of Egypt's *treasures*—He shall disclose Himself to His brethren in the day when they shall "look upon Him whom they have pierced and mourn." Till then, their eyes are holden. The SON OF MAN they see not. Let it not be supposed that I regard Israel as the total of the treasure; but shall we affect surprise that our blessed Lord called that people a treasure hid in the field, who became, on the human side, the link at which the divine *nature became associated with the human* in order to the redemption of man and the glory of God? To Israel, mainly, pertain the governmental glories which pertain to the Millennial Age. Theirs is the new covenant in relation to coming earthly glory. They will be the royal Priesthood and the Holy Nation when the Lord reigns over the earth. Mark these words concerning Israel: "Men shall call you the ministers of our God, ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves" (ISA. lxi, 6).

Time fails me. I must not, in relation to this parable, add more than point out that the field, which is the world, the Cosmos, has been bought at such a price that the whole belongs to the SON OF MAN, for whose coming we wait. So hath this *Man* gained the whole world; not at the price of the loss of His soul. Holy souls cannot be lost. They may know, however, in their measure, something of fellowship with Him who, in relation to the great price paid down, uttered these costly words: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." In the light of this treasure, teaching how blessed are the future prospects of the earth when the morning breaks which succeeds the great day of His wrath.

THE PARABLE OF THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE. This parable needs to be read in the light of a tender and deepening interest on the part of our blessed Lord in regard to those of whom it is written: "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready." Of course that is future, but faith refuses to fix a date for possessed love. The merchantman can be no other than Christ Himself. Do we see Him hiding and buying the field in the parable of the hidden treasure? Here He is seeking a special and choice value.

There is a striking distinction between the hidden treasure in the field and one pearl of exceeding great price. A value so great centred in that pearl, that even this wealthy merchantman must needs part with all he had in order to become possessed of the inestimable prize. Such action bespeaks not only perception of value on the part of the merchant, but intense desire—desire, be it observed,

begotten of great love. Men do not usually expend all they have in order to possess themselves of one costly gem.

I am greatly mistaken if we have not here the pearl of parables, as well as the parable of the pearl. I believe that the pearl of great price made known by our precious Lord in this parable is His Church, the mystic Body, concerning whom it is written: "Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for her; that he might present her to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that she might be holy and without blemish" (EPHES. v, 25-27).

My reader must bear with me in changing the word "it" in this passage. Verily, the original will bear it. Love such as is here disclosed cannot be set upon *things*, but on persons. It is blessed to know something of fellowship with the love, as well as with the sufferings of Christ. Oh, how difficult must have been the position of the Beloved One when on earth in regard to making known by words His wonderful love.

To speak of a treasure hidden, a pearl possessed; to be compelled, in order to illustrate His love, to appeal to some precious *thing*, surely His great yearning heart must have been tried. So often as I think of these neuter words I feel impelled by a force—which I understand and feel, though I cannot describe—to protest against all the "ITS" and "ITS" that I find in connection with the Beloved One. Not *it*, but *him* or *her*. Surely it is His voice we hear: "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee" (SONG OF SOL ix, 4). Oh, how intense

does personality become by the Gospel! What a divine womanliness, if I may use the term, underlies the outburst of Paul: "He loved me, and gave Himself for me" (GAL. ii, 20). Surely no Scripture more sweetly expresses the gist of the parable we are considering than these precious words.

The world is becoming old and hard, and love declineth. Oh, let us be careful that the heavenly bridegroom doth not have occasion to say: "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love" (REV. ii, 4). Whilst I would accentuate the length, breadth, depth, and height of the Divine Merchantman's personal love, be it remembered that the pearl of the parable is not one, but every member of His mystic body.

Recalling the sweet words I have quoted from EPHES. v, concerning the love of Christ to His Church, who, with spiritual discernment, can fail to see the wonderful antitype the Church, the Lamb's wife, is to Eve, the helpmeet, partner, and associate of Adam? It will be remembered that we read in GEN. ii, 20, that for Adam no helpmeet was found. Then follows these words: "The Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib which the Lord God had taken from man made (builded) He a woman, and brought her unto the man; and Adam said, This is now bone of my bones flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his

mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh" (GEN. ii, 21-24).

The bride of Christ, His beloved one, His pearl of great price, in like manner, is taken out of Him who is God's New Man—the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. Made partakers of His divine nature, through death and resurrection with Him, each member of His glorious body is being builded by God and brought unto the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. The Church which He loved and gave Himself for, comprehends His associates, His loved one, His betrothed, His bride.

Well does Paul write, emphasizing the same great truth of our Lord's wonderful love: "No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but loveth and cherisheth it, as the Lord the Church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." There can be no question of the identity of this Scripture with the teaching in Genesis to which I have referred, for here also we find the words: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This," says the Apostle, "is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and His Church. Well does the Liturgy of the Church of England affirm that the institution of marriage sets forth the "mystical union which exists between Christ and His Church."

It will be seen that we distinguished between Israel and the Church of Christ. For want of clear thought at this point great confusion has arisen. Israel's position and place in the purpose of God is pre-eminently connected with the earth. In the Millennial Age they will represent

the authority and rule of our Lord unto all the nations of the earth. The law of the Lord will go forth from Jerusalem: "for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. ii, 3).

Those who are members of the Body of Christ, whether Jew or Gentile (and both have part in the mystery of the Body of Christ), are not an earthly people. By virtue of their union with the Lord they are essentially a heavenly people. These, as we have shewn elsewhere, will reside with Christ in the place which He has gone to prepare (John xiv, 2). The reign with Him is *over* the earth, rather than upon it. The earth is the sphere of the rule and authority of Christ and His Church, but it will not be their habitation.

It is a deeply interesting question, often asked, as to the limit, both in regard to time and membership, which pertains to the Body of Christ. It is much to be regretted that this most precious subject should have aroused so much contention among believers. I cannot fail to see that there is a limit to the number of the members of the Body of Christ, but with my present light I acknowledge that I cannot define it. The Scriptures do not appear to me to reveal clearly when the Body of Christ began to be formed.

I know that it has been strongly maintained that our Lord must have risen from the dead as Head of the Body and Lord of the Church, before any of the members could have being; but then this view arose, and is identified with, the singular theory that none of the Old Testament saints are among the members of His Body.

It is further held that the mystery of the Body began in connection with our Lord's resurrection, and in identity with the gift and work of the Holy Spirit. I cannot think this view would have been held so tenaciously, had it not become a somewhat prominent item in connection with a controversy which I need do no more than mention.

My spiritual instincts and perceptions, if such terms are admissible, protest against the exclusion of Abraham, and David, and Daniel from the Body of Christ. With my present light, I believe that all, from Abel downwards, unto the marriage of the Lamb, when His wife shall have made herself ready, are comprehended in that Body. True, we who hold this view may be wrong, but that remains to be proved.

In reference to the necessity for the resurrection of our Lord as "the Head," "the beginning," "the firstborn from the dead," ere the commencement of the membership of the Body could have place, I thoughtfully submit that the suggested difficulty may not exist. The position of the saints before Christ came was very similar to that which is ours. They looked forward to, and exercised faith in, Him who came, and should die, and rise again. We look backward to, and exercise faith in Him who has come, who has died, and risen again. "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" is to me a Scripture which opens wide the door for great possibilities to faith in all ages. Faith has retrospective, as well as prospective, vision and possession. How many saints rejoice in God's eternal love: *i.e.*, love so far as known, ere time began. It is not written that the Body of Christ had no

membership or existence before Christ came; but that this mystery was hid in God. If Israel existed in Abraham, why not the Church in Him who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever? (HEB. xiii, 8).

Having said so much, let me, ere we close, remind my readers of the remarkable words found in HEBREWS xii. Contrasting Zion with Sinai, and the glories of the Gospel with the condemnation of the law, the Apostle writes: "But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the firstborn which are written in heaven; and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel."

I confess that I cannot read this wonderful passage, this heaping up, this going utterly beyond all Israel's conceptions of future spiritual blessing, without seeing in these divine factors (I had almost said spiritual corporations and companies)—without consenting to be open to conviction regarding any theme which is, as this one, an open rather than a settled question.

THE PARABLE OF THE DRAW NET.—This parable, the last of the series, reveals the mystery of the compulsory and supernatural closing of this mixed and corrupt age. Our Lord thus speaks: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind; which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down and gathered the good into vessels and cast

the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the age" (*aion*). (MATT. xiii, 47-49).

Here is presented the closing scene; the fishing has reached the climax. The night is closing: the net has been cast over a comprehensive area; it is full, and it is being drawn to the shore. Its encompassing folds have gathered of every kind. The crowding and striving for the freedom of the sea are points which will not escape the notice of those who are watching the signs of the times. Men are saying that we are too many, too crowded, overdone; nay, they are wickedly violating God's law, and calling in the aid of sin and science to prevent its multiplication. Are not the times in which we live strikingly in accord with the symbolism of the draw-net? Why not draw to shore if the net is full? Is not the gathering of every kind ample in suggestiveness also? Within the wide net of Christendom every kind is enclosed; good and bad, regenerate and unregenerate, ritualist, rationalist, and formalist. A well-known writer has truthfully said: "Indiscriminate inclosure is the order of the day; comprehension, the cry of the hour. A very large proportion of the National Church is contending that it ought to admit within its pale all forms and degrees of religious thought, to foster every variety of creed, from the full-blown Popery, and fervid folly of Ritualism, down to the barest Socinianism, and the negations of German Neology." This witness is true, and since these words were written, the current runs still more strongly in the direction named. Definite truth, ascertained and unchangeable, is scouted and utterly ignored. Large numbers

of modern writers never mention the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, though, forsooth, they are identified with moral philosophy, ethics, and utilitarianism. Goodness is made to mean "good form." History repeats itself. As the Lord Jesus was refused lordship by Israel, so also is He denied supremacy by Christendom and the world.

Not long since, one of the great leaders of modern thought and scientific speculation actually said that progress was being hindered, and the way blocked, by the half-civilised Nazarene. Is this according to the will of the SON OF MAN? Is this the reign of Christ? Why is the net drawn to shore? Why the crisis indicated? Why the separation—the good fish put in vessels preserved—the bad cast, not into the sea, but into the fire? The end of the age cometh, wherein the present corrupt and mixed conditions reach a climax. Who can tell how soon that crisis may come? In closing our brief study of the seven parables, may I not again ask: Where is there room for any Millennial Age, or reign of righteousness, prior to the appearing of the SON OF MAN in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory?

CHAPTER XIX.

THE MILLENNIAL AND THE ETERNAL KINGDOM.

"All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass" (MATT. xxi, 4, 5).

"Then answered Peter and said unto Him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed Thee; what shall we have, therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (MATT. xix, 27, 28).

"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand" (LUKE xxi, 28-30).

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom" (MATT. xvi, 27, 28).

"For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (1 COR. xv, 25-28).

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (MATT. vi, 10).

HOW WE LEARN.

Great truths are dearly bought. The common truth
  Such as men give and take from day to day,
Comes in the common walk of easy life,
  Blown by the careless wind across our way.

Bought in the market, at the current price,
  Bred of the smile, the jest, perchance the bowl;
It tells no tales of daring or of worth,
  Nor pierces even the surface of a soul.

Great truths are greatly won. Not found by chance,
  Nor wafted on the breath of summer-dream;
But grasped in the great struggle of the soul,
  Hard buffeting with adverse wind and stream.

Not in the general mart, 'mid corn and wine;
  Not in the merchandise of gold and gems;
Not in the world's gay hall of midnight mirth;
  Not 'mid the blaze of regal diadems;

But in the day of conflict, fear, and grief,
  When the strong hand of God, put forth in might,
Ploughs up the subsoil of the stagnant heart,
  And brings the imprisioned truth-seed to the light.

Wrung from the troubled spirit, in hard hours
  Of weakness, solitude, perchance of pain,
Truth springs, like harvests from the well ploughed field;
  And the soul feels it has not wept in vain.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE MILLENNIAL AND THE ETERNAL KINGDOM.

A STRIKING illustration of the deep meaning which attaches to the words of Christ is afforded in the first prayer which our Lord taught His disciples to present to the Father. That petition is given in MATT. vi, 9-15: "Our Father, who art in heaven; Hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Remark the words: "Thy kingdom come." The kingdom of the Father, as distinguished from the kingdom of Christ the Son.

It is clear that this prayer does not refer to the Millennial Age. It is evident that during the reign of Christ over the whole earth, the world will not be without sin, neither the will of God done on earth as it is in heaven. In heaven the divine will is perfectly obeyed. There, each personality, as also the volition of each individual,

every motive, desire, thought, and action, is in entire accord with the mind of the Father. To this final condition of blessedness the coming sovereignty of Christ for a thousand years has reference. The kingdom of Christ the Son on earth necessarily precedes the eternal state into which sin shall never enter.

It cannot be affirmed either of the commencement, progress, or consummation of the Millennial Age that sin is not (*see* Rev. xix, 11-21; Isa. lxvi, 20; Rev. xx, 7-15). Death is not destroyed until the end of the dispensation of the fulness of times. This, in itself, is conclusive as to the fact of the existence of sin until the time of the final judgment. That judgment takes place at the close of the Millennial Age. It is most important to bear in mind that one great purpose of the coming of our Lord in power and great glory is, as Paul expresses it, "to put down all rule, and all authority, and power." These words shew the antagonism which will exist to His authority when our Lord appears. If not, why does He come, as the R.V. gives it, to "abolish the rule, and the authority, and the power, which exists?"

This testimony proves that there will be no Millennium, no reign of righteousness and peace on earth, until our Lord personally appears. Indeed, the expression: "Thy kingdom come," whether applied to the Father's eternal kingdom or the Son's Millennial reign, is to be understood in the sense of approach, rather than in the ordinary idea of extension. (*See* Alford's G. Testament.)

There could be no more forcible presentation of this great question than that found in 1 Cor. xv, 23-28. After

affirming the truth of the resurrection, the Apostle proceeds to discriminate the different times at which resurrection has taken place in the past, or will take place in the future. He says: "Christ, the firstfruits; afterwards they which are Christ's at His coming."

It is interesting to call to mind that the resurrection of our Lord was specially identified with the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, the preaching of "the Gospel of the Glory of the Blessed God," and the revelation of "the mystery of the body of Christ." So also, at our Lord's second coming, the resurrection of the dead, and the instant change of all the living saints, will immediately precede the manifestation of His kingdom and glory.

Doubtless some of my readers will be ready to ask: But does not the Apostle in the same Scripture add, "Then cometh the end?" He does; but the context clearly shews that he is not speaking of the time just referred to, when our Lord comes to raise the righteous dead, but concerning the time when the Son delivers up the kingdom to the Father. These are the words: "Then cometh the end, when He (Christ the King) shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father." The Apostle distinctly indicates when this is done. It is after the Millennial Age, and subsequent to the final judgment; for the last enemy, death, is not destroyed until then. These are the words of the living God, uttered at the judgment of THE GREAT WHITE THRONE: "And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire, this is the second death, even the lake of fire" (REV. xx, 14, R.V.).

As the passage in 1 COR. xv is helpful to a clear un-

derstanding on the subject of the kingdom of Christ on earth, I quote it so that my reader may have the whole paragraph before him: "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. For he must reign until he hath put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (verses 23-28).

How intelligent and orderly is this! What an illustration and argument is here furnished as to the nature and character of the divine wisdom and energy, which alone is competent to bring about these magnificent results! To attempt to find that competency in the preaching of the Gospel, or in the diffusion of the great moral forces which attach to the order and working of this preparatory age, is to ignore the testimony of the Word of God, viz.: that Christ shall fashion His kingdom, reign on His throne, and bear the glory.

I remember pressing these thoughts upon a friend who is strongly opposed to the views I am advocating. "What?" said my friend, "God interpose in power! The Most High depart from the use of the moral forces which are the glory of the Christian system? This," said the speaker, "gives a wrench to my whole moral nature." I quote this, because I believe it accurately represents the intellectual condition of many minds in reference to this vital question.

But surely to all such objections there is an answer which is satisfactory and conclusive. Force in the hands of the Mighty God is moral power of highest quality. Force is mainly objectionable to our minds because of its misuse, oppression, and unjust application amongst men. It would not be difficult to shew that every intervention on the part of God, where force has been His minister righteousness and love dictated the working, and beneficent results always followed. Force as a Minister of State in the Executive Counsels of God, means coercive goodness.

Let any intelligent man visit, as I have recently done, the Southern States of America, and see whether four years of fratricidal strife have not been overruled of God, so that, in the judgment of men, that war is now seen to have been a moral agency of a very high order. No doubt judgment is God's "strange work." It is that activity of the divine energy in which our Lord has little pleasure. Not until the divine patience had reached the utmost limit in the days of Noah, was the force of the flood of heaven permitted; the ark, which probably might have been constructed in thirty years, embraced one hundred and twenty, during which God's long-suffering mercy continued. Then force came in. Not until Pharaoh had hardened mind, and neck, and face, as brass against Israel and Israel's God, did the upheaped waters cover Egypt's host in desolating judgment. Then force came in. Not until horrible iniquity had enswathed the entire population did the fire of God descend upon Sodom and Gomorrah. Then force came in. Not until

America had become steeped to the neck in the dreadful wickedness of slavery, did retributive judgment "cry 'havock,' and let slip the dogs of war!" Not until England had used her great prowess to desolate the nations of the earth by her accursed drink-traffic; not until she forced open, at the point of the bayonet, the ports of China to secure freedom to her accursed traffic in opium, did internal disquiet and social wickedness threaten and blight her political and commercial prosperity. Sending forth her brood of unclean birds, some are finding their way home to roost.

Men ignore the fact that God, as the supreme moral Governor, has responsibility in regard to the continuance of individual and national life. When the conditions become absolutely corrupt, the voice of God is heard: "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" That responsibility is clearly recognised in the Scriptures. The divine judgments which have taken place prove it. The cutting off of nations and individuals accentuate it. The command of God to destroy the Caananites was the divine sentence to bring to an end an utterly corrupt and long-established national iniquity. This was divine righteousness in beneficent action. Should the God of heaven refuse to act in solemn judgment, might not His fitness as the Supreme Ruler of the universe be challenged?

The fact is that at the present time there is an immense amount of corrupt and vicious sympathy with sin and sinners. The men of the world are using the present season of the divine forbearance to run riot in every ungodly and abominable excess. Solomon hit off to the life the present

condition when he said: "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil" (ECCLES. vii, 11).

Will any man affirm that the existing conditions should be indefinitely prolonged? Are they not positively subversive of good? The time draws near when the question shall be asked and answered concerning the present abounding wickedness: "Doth not God know? and is there knowledge with the Most High?" and the answer shall be: "He doth know, and He taketh knowledge," for "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints; to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" (JUDE xiv, 15). Rejecting the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the word of grace, the day of reckoning comes when the Lord Himself shall bring overwhelming judgment upon the destroying and guilty sinners, the vast majority of whom not only destroy the earth, but the good which is in it.

Let it not be supposed that the coming of our Lord means the total destruction of human life. His intervention is directed against the existing "rule, and authority, and power." From the principalities and powers in the heavenlies, comprehending the devil and all his hosts, down to every form of corrupt government, including all social and commercial institutions inimical to righteousness, goodness, and truth, will be broken up and dashed in pieces.

That the destruction of human life will be very great and terrible, there can be no question. The angels of might are to be the executors of the divine vengeance. They will make no mistake. They will accomplish the binding and imprisonment of Satan and his hosts. This is no moral agency, but the force of heaven in spiritual beings excellent in strength, who overcome, bind, and shut up in the abyss that old deceiver and murderer, the devil.

The sons of men have trifled with the force of moral truth to such an extent that it ceases to be to them principle, restraint, grit, or moral fibre. Man, through familiarity with iniquity, is losing his backbone. From the standpoint of the judgment of God made known in His Word, man, considered morally, is a degeneracy. The close of the nineteenth century sees him a mere jelly fish, sunning himself on the sands of time, in the ebbs and flows of the tides of the world's fashions, appetites, and lusts. The very thought of centuries yet to come, wherein the processes of moral truth should be as slow and ineffective as they have been in the past, is appalling! Surely this is not the whole, neither the best which our Lord has revealed of His working. He will stir up His strength, and come and save us. His word is pledged. "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. x, 37).

Ere we close, let us recall the prayer uttered by our Lord: "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." This was the prayer of faith, and shall be answered as certainly as it was uttered. How blessed to remember this first petition of Him who

found it His meat and drink to do His Father's will! Thus, in His earliest ministry, we observe that His great mind was occupied with the final and glorious issue when that prayer shall be fulfilled.

The Holy Son of God will not rest until this result is accomplished. To this end time hath bounds. To this end the great company of the redeemed are being called out and made partakers of the divine nature. Born of God, through the direct agency of the Holy Spirit and the truth of God, the heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ are being prepared for the coming of the King. These will form the executive of God throughout the Millennial Age. They live and reign with Christ a thousand years.

No wonder that Paul pleaded with the Church at Corinth, and chided them for their want of perception: "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge (rule) the world? Know ye not that the saints shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. vi, 2, 3). Oh, what a season for education, in view of the eternal ages, will the Millennial Reign afford to the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty!

Come with me, my reader. Enter that inner sanctuary where the Great High Priest communes with His Father and our Father. Listen! He speaks; His words distil as sweet-smelling myrrh: "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me; the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them, that they may be one, as We are." And yet once again: "That they all may be one, as

Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me" (JOHN xvii, 21, 22). Yes, verily; when the manifestation of the sons of God takes place, when the King comes and changes His saints into His glorious image and likeness, then, *but not before*, will the world believe that God has sent Him. O glorious advent! Come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly!

The question will arise: "Do you understand that the saints will reign upon the earth?" For clear distinction I answer, Christ and His bride, the Church, will reign over the earth, rather than upon it. Clear as a sunbeam does it appear that whilst the whole earth is to become the scene of the government of the great Theocratic King, the earth itself is but a small part of His Heirship and Kingdom. The Lordship of Christ is thus given: "For by Him were all things created which are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers—all things were by Him and for Him. For it hath pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell. And He is head of the body, the Church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all He might have the pre-eminence" (COL. i, 16-19).

To every member of Christ belongs already, through faith, the incorruptible life. The incorruptible body will be brought, and become the dwelling of that eternal life, when the morning of the manifestation of the sons of God arrives. What then? Shall the earth, which is and will be a

corruptible sphere, be the home of the Church, which is His Body? Surely not. The incorruptible life, when indwelling the incorruptible body, will certainly possess the incorruptible inheritance.

Speaking of those who are begotten again unto the living hope, the Apostle Peter adds: "to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 PET. i, 4, 5). The place of unfading beauty and eternal glory which our Lord went away to prepare, the palace of the King, I understand to be the meet and fitting home of the Church of the First-born (JOHN xiv, 2, 3).

Further, may it not be that, as it is now, a mental capability to visit in thought the most distant parts of the universe, so the children of the resurrection may by an act of will take personal form and local position at pleasure? It was so with our glorious Lord, after His resurrection. He could say on one occasion: "Handle me, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have. And when He had thus spoken, He shewed them His hands and His feet" (LUKE xxiv, 39, 40). On another, He walked, talked, and ate with two of His disciples, and then vanished out of their sight (ceased to be seen), (LUKE, xxiv, 31). On the morning of the resurrection, it will be remembered that the Beloved One said to Mary: "Touch Me not, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go unto My brethren, and say unto them: I ascend unto My father and your Father, and to My God and your God" (JOHN xx, 17).

Who need doubt that upon that very morning, when the Risen Lord ceased to speak with Mary, He did ascend to the Father and present Himself in His divine and human perfectness as "the firstfruits" from the earth, that He there offered Himself, through the eternal Spirit, without spot to God? (HEB. ix, 14). (The type in LEVIT. xxiii, 10-12, is conclusive both as to the requirement and fact.) Here then we see clearly that our Lord was no longer subject to material laws or conditions. He could, and did, ascend to the locality of heaven. I say locality, for it has been well remarked: "Absence of locality is not a thinkable quantity." Have we not here deeply interesting data as to the ability which the Church of the Firstborn may possess, to visit the earth, or indeed any part of the great inheritance, by an act of will according to the good pleasure of Him with whom they reign? We shall know the better rendering of that act of the arch-deceiver, who shewed the Lord all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them in a moment of time. The true King, the earth's blessed Potentate, will shew to His Church the greatness of the Holy Father's Kingdom, not in a moment of time, but throughout the eternal ages. Let it not be forgotten that of the saints it is written, not only that "He loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood"; but that "He hath made them kings and priests unto God," as well as sharers of His coming earthly kingdom and glory (REV. i, 5, 6).

CHAPTER XX.

A SIGNIFICANT PARABLE.

"And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that, when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me" (LUKE xix, 11-19, 26, 27).

DIVINE ORDER.

'Tis first the true and then the beautiful,
Not first the beautiful and then the true ;
First the wild moor, with rock and reed, and pool,
Then the gay garden, rich in scent and hue.

'Tis first the good and then the beautiful,
Not first the beautiful and then the good ;
First the rough seed, sown in the rougher soil,
Then the flower-blossom, or the branching wood.

Not first the glad and then the sorrowful;
But first the sorrowful and then the glad ;
Tears for a day ; for earth of tears is full,
Then we forget that we were ever sad.

Not first the bright, and after that the dark,
But first the dark, and after that the bright;
First the thick cloud, and then the rainbow's arc,
First the dark grave, then resurrection-light.

'Tis first the night,—stern night of storm and war,—
Long night of heavy clouds and veiled skies ;
Then the far sparkle of the Morning-star,
That bids the saints awake and dawn arise.

CHAPTER XX.

A SIGNIFICANT PARABLE.

IT will naturally occur to the reader of the foregoing pages that, admitting the fact of the Lord's personal return, the second time, to reign in power and great glory, there must be in the Scriptures definite statements which conclusively shew the same. There are many. One, however, is so specially pertinent and germane to this discussion, that I ask the closest attention of my readers, whilst we carefully consider it.

In the nineteenth chapter of the Gospel of Luke, and at the eleventh verse, we read: "And as they heard these things, Jesus added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought the kingdom of God should immediately appear." The occasion, therefore, which called forth the parable which follows was found in the mistake into which the disciples had fallen; they thought the kingdom should immediately appear.

To correct this mistake, not as to the fact, but as to the time, was the object of our Lord's remarkable words. "He said therefore: A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants unto him and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them: Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us" (verses 12, 13).

I am aware that it has been affirmed by some expositors that our Lord was here referring to the protest sent by the Jews to Augustus Cæsar concerning Archelaus. I cannot say less than this, that such an explanation is entirely unsatisfactory. Evidently our Lord is referring to the fact of His own rejection and departure. Without question He is the nobleman, and the far country where He is to receive the kingdom is portrayed distinctly by Daniel in his clear and vivid prophecy (chapter vii, 13, 14): "And I saw in the night visions, and behold one like unto the SON OF MAN came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him nigh before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

Speaking with a distinguished Hebrew scholar, some time since, he affirmed that this whole passage might be briefly paraphrased: "He was invested with the sovereignty of the earth." At this point let us recall the rejection of our Lord upon the earth, the denial by man to Him of

either glory, dominion or kingdom. Daniel describes not an earthly scene, but a scene laid in the very presence of God. How completely does the testimony of the prophet confirm the words of Christ in reference to His departure into the far country. That sovereignty which was denied to our Lord here on earth is seen fulfilled and brought to pass in the vision of Daniel, of the glory of the SON OF MAN.

That investiture, so far as its manifestation is concerned, is yet future. When the fulness of the time arrives, there shall be brought to pass the words of the holy seer: "And the angel which I saw standing upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his voice to heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are therein, and the earth and the things that are therein, and the sea and the things which are therein, that there should be time (*i.e*, delay, R.V.) no longer." But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then is finished the mystery of God, according to the good tidings which he declared to His servants the prophets. (REV x, 5-7).

Let us now carefully notice and compare the number, attitude, and character of the servants, as delineated by our Lord in the twelfth verse, with the number, attitude, and character of the citizens in the thirteenth verse. Observe it is ten servants. The citizens are an unnumbered host. The servants are a small minority—the citizens a large and vast majority. The servants are seen entrusted and trading with their Lord's capital, living in view of the great fact of His return, of their occupation for Him and their accountability to Him as their Lord and Master,

when He comes. They are seen contemptuous, worldly, and hardened; emboldened by His absence, they deny His authority and lordship; pursue their own earthly schemes in complete disregard of His will; hate His person, deride His character; and, not content to abide His return, send the insulting message: "We will not have this man to reign over us."

Such, be it observed, is the testimony of Christ, who in these two verses sketches, in prophetic brevity, the whole interval between His ascension to the Father and His coming again to earth in power and great glory. Let it be distinctly recognised, that there are no characteristic changes hinted at, such, *e.g.*, as an indefinite addition to the number of the servants, or a marked diminution of the great mass of the rejecting and ungodly citizens.

Terrible as is the statement which is found in the twenty-seventh verse, it must be remembered who uttered it, by whose authority it stands. There it is carefully defined by Him whose word knows neither colouring nor exaggeration. There it is, a prophetic statement, made in full view of the fact and time of His return. "But those mine *enemies*, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me." Our Lord left them citizens. He returns to find them enemies. Such is the evolution of man, which our Lord declares will mark the close of this wicked and adulterous age.

It is deeply interesting to notice that when the nobleman returns, the faithful servants are dealt with first and rewarded, observe, not with salvation. The salvation of the soul is not a question of reward but of grace, God's free and sovereign gift. Nevertheless, let it be remembered that

when, through "regeneration," the responsibility of the sinner as such ceases, the responsibility of the child of God begins.

Let me affectionately beg my reader's attention to this vital point. The unrenewed sinner cannot be spoken of as a child of God, unless it be in the sense in which God is declared to be the Creator, and man His offspring (Acts xvii, 28). The words: "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath afore ordained that we should walk in them," can only apply to those who have "been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever" (Ephes. ii, 10; 1 Pet. i, 23). Let us therefore prayerfully ponder the solemn fact that according to our faithfulness to the Lord during this evil age will be the positions of honour which we shall occupy in His kingdom.

Mark the testimony given by the faithful servant: "Lord, Thy pound hath gained ten pounds." He does not emphasize his industry, but gladly recognises the great assistance which His Lord's entrusted capital had afforded. Hearken to the Lord's reply: "Well, thou good servant, because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities." If this reward had reference to heaven, and not to the Millennial Kingdom on earth, how wanting in appropriateness such words would be. With our eye upon the Coming Kingdom of our Lord, and the collateral fact that His people will reign with Him over the whole earth during the thousand years, how full of intelligence is this reference to authority over ten cities.

Now carefully notice: "And the second came, saying, Lord, Thy pound hath gained five pounds. And He said

unto him also, Be thou over five cities." There is no "Well done!" in this case. There is a diminished measure of service, and therefore a diminished reward. How solemnly instructive is this. What light it throws on the whole question of stewardship. How it makes known that, according to our faithfulness, after our regeneration, will be the positions of honour assigned to us in the Coming Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. How destitute of meaning the testimony of our Lord in this parable, if, as some affirm, time is moving on indefinitely to an issue terminating, according to the popular view, in the "general resurrection," and what is called "the final judgment."

It remains for us to observe the solemn condemnation of, and the taking away from, the unfaithful servant of that which he acknowledged the possession of, as well as his refusal to use. Finally, we are confronted with the solemn fact, none the less conclusive because of its partially inferential character, that when our Lord returns to the earth, there will not have been in His judgment any improvement; that from the standpoint of the spread of righteousness and truth, and that which means God's glory, the conditions will not be better when He returns to the earth, but certainly worse. The avowed hostility of the citizens, expressed in the insulting words at the time of His departure: "We will not have this man to reign over us!" has given place to an established and final condition of enmity. The closing words of our Lord are absolutely conclusive in regard to this: "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me" (verse 27).

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SUGGESTED TEST APPLIED.

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that He as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that He is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 THESS. ii, 1-12).

THE NIGHT AND THE MORNING.

To dream a troubled dream, and then awaken
To the soft gladness of a summer sky ;
To dream ourselves alone, unloved, forsaken,
And then to wake 'mid smiles, and love, and joy ;

To look at evening on the storm's rude motion,
The cloudy tumult of the fretted deep ;
And then at day-burst upon that same ocean,
Soothed to the stillness of its stillest sleep,--

So runs our course, so tells the church her story,
So to the end shall it be ever told ;
Brief shame on earth, but after shame the glory
That wanes not, dims not, never waxes old.

Lord Jesus, come, and end this troubled dreaming !
Dark shadows vanish, rosy twilight break !
Morn of the true and real, burst forth, calm beaming,
Day of the beautiful, arise, awake.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SUGGESTED TEST APPLIED.

IT will be asked: Does the testimony of history corroborate and agree with the teaching of our Lord in this remarkable parable?

This question is profoundly important. Let us carefully consider it. It will be observed that our Lord's words, the "ten servants"—the unnumbered "citizens"—are eminently suggestive of proportion. The proportions stand thus: A small minority contrasted with a vast majority. I propose to use the words as a test, and submit them to application. In the use of this test we may embrace the whole of the past nineteen centuries, neither is there any part of the habitable earth in which the proof may not be used. It is only fair, however, to add that the legitimate sphere is found in those countries which are either nominally or professedly Christian. We

may take the Continent of Europe, *e.g.*, embracing, as it practically does, what is known as Christendom.

Beginning with England, we ask: Is it not a melancholy fact that a small minority of the population only are true Christians? The great majority are unbelievers; their relation to Christ is precisely that occupied by the "citizens" in the parable. Whether London or Manchester, Edinburgh or Glasgow, Dublin or Belfast, be taken as the sphere in which application of the test is made, the proportion is as the "ten servants" to the unnumbered "citizens."

This test applies with equal force to the cities where the principal seats of learning are, as also those other cities where "fashion and social form" predominate. Indeed, there is no city, town, or community throughout the United Kingdom, to which these words of our Lord will not apply. This is true in regard to the varied classes into which English society is usually divided. The upper, middle, and lower classes, in their great majorities, utterly reject the rule and the authority of Christ.

The same fact applies to the great majority of intellectual and scientific men; with greater force still in the Army and the Navy. It is emphatically true of the bulk of the working men; so also of the nobles, of the houses of the legislature, the government, and the public press. Nor can it be said that this proportion or these sorrowful facts are peculiar to this generation, or to the nineteenth century. From the days in which our Lord uttered this prophetic parable, from the first century right onward to the present time, with sad and persistent consistency, the cry has been everywhere heard: "We will not have this man to reign over us."

Let this test be directed to any of the European nations. Let France, Germany, Austria, Russia, Italy, Belgium, or Spain become the sphere of the application of these words of our Lord, and the facts become still more painfully apparent. The proportion is not seen to be greater; it is a diminished ratio, rather than otherwise. Whether Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Brussels Madrid, or Rome come to mind, the solemn truthfulness and appropriateness of our Lord's words are manifest. This also is true of the past history of the whole of Europe.

No thoughtful student of either the history of the Church or of the world but must be struck with the confirmatory evidence which it yields to the testimony of our Lord. The "ten servants" and the unnumbered mass of rejecting citizens are everywhere seen. From the days in which Imperial Rome, the great world power, endorsed the crime of Israel and crucified the King of heaven, down to the close of the nineteenth century, the nations and people of the earth have utterly refused to submit to the government of Jesus Christ. The Lord's testimony to His disciples: "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," solemnly accentuates the truth with which we are dealing (LUKE xii, 32).

Well might the Apostle, in startling terms, rebuke the royal princes of that early age. Reminding them of their iniquitous ignorance, he wrote, to clever and philosophic Corinth, these words: "Which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory" (1 COR. ii, 8). Surely no more tremendous admission of the brutal and senseless wickedness

of Imperial Rome, when, in her guilty complicity with the Jewish house she killed the Prince of Life, was ever made than when the conscience-stricken and vacillating Proconsul Pilate wrote over the Cross, in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, the significant words : "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Unconsciously, he wrote both history and prophecy.

Jesus Chirst is indeed the great centre both of prophecy and history. Israel may reject God's King, but He shall reign whose right it is. Rome, in her earth-born prowess, may crucify the Lord of Glory, but His voice shall be heard saying : "I am He that liveth, and was dead ; and behold I am alive again for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death." The unbelieving Jew and the hardened Gentile may conspire to deliver the Lord of glory to a shameful death, but in the darkest hour of His humiliation His enemies shall engrave upon His Cross the testimony of His coming sovereignty in the three principal languages of the known world.

"God is not a man, that he should lie ; neither the son of man, that he should change his mind." Because our Lord Jesus Christ, Jehovah's fellow, "emptied himself of his glory, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was found in fashion as a man, and humbled himself unto death, even the death of the Cross, therefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (PHIL. ii, 7-11).

We have not yet reached the limit of the days allotted to the course of this evil age. But the sands in the hour-

glass are running out. The Saturday evening of the world's brief week is come, and "the morning cometh, the morning." The dark night, also, which precedes the morning is at hand. The culmination of human wickedness will assuredly be reached as that awful night advances. The signs of the times are ominous of the approach of the last days wherein the personal Antichrist, the devil's clever and subtle counterfeit of the Son of Man, shall be revealed. We have not been left without definite knowledge concerning his character, and the certainty of his appearing. The Lord Himself hath given testimony in these striking words: "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (JOHN v, 43).

The question is a deeply interesting one: Who is the Antichrist? I shall not attempt to fix upon any individual, or hazard any statement in regard to the time of his appearing. With equal clearness I express the conviction that, as the Apostle John writes: "Little children, it is the last time! and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time" (1 JOHN ii, 18). I quote this testimony because it clearly proves that, whilst the Apostle frankly recognised the existence of the antichristian spirit, he distinguished between Antichrists and THE ANTICHRIST. This we do most emphatically. There can be no question that Herod, Antiochus, Epiphanes, and many other eminently wicked men were antichristian in character and working; but it is equally certain that the world has never yet seen THE ANTICHRIST. This also may be affirmed with

equal force of every antichristian system or principle. Take the Papacy! It has within its system directly antichristian principles and activities. It has proved itself to be the bitter persecutor and ruthless destroyer of the Church of God; nevertheless, it cannot be shewn that the Romish Church has denied the Father and the Son in the same way in which THE ANTICHRIST will do. Chrysostom, well says: "After true apostles, false apostles; after real miracles, false miracles; after Christ, Antichrist." Exactly. Antichrist, without question, is the devil's counterfeit of the Son of God. He will be manifested as a man—probably one of the most perfect gentlemen the world has ever seen. The fact that he is Satan's incarnation will not be disclosed until he has obtained the place of supreme pre-eminence amongst men. The Word of God declares that his policy will be to obtain the kingdom by flatteries of peaceful intention. He will, in order to secure universal favour, leading up to the Presidential Headships of the kings of the earth, propose general disarmament, and pose as the world's regenerator on the lines of world-wide commercial prosperity, peace, and enjoyment. The cloven hoof, to use a homely simile, will be well hidden until he hast practically secured his position as the Monarch of the World,—the Man of Sin—The Antichrist—who will utterly deny the Father and the Son, and in due season seek to obliterate the recognition of God, and the practical substitution of the worship of his own image, upon pain of death (JOHN ii, 22; 2 THESS. ii, 3-10; DAN. xii, 21-45; REV. xiii). There will be no room to mistake who the Antichrist is in the VIVID LIGHT of these Scriptures.

CHAPTER XXII.

SCIENTIFIC THEORY AND SCRIPTURE TESTIMONY.

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell" (COL. i, 12-19).

"In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (COL. ii, 3-9).

NOTHING IS LOST.

To talk with God—no *breath* is lost ;
Talk on, talk on !
To walk with God—no *strength* is lost ;
Walk on, walk on !
To wait on God—no *time* is lost ;
Wait on, wait on !
To grind the axe—no *work* is lost ;
Grind on, grind on !
The work is quicker—better done,
Not needing half the strength laid on ;
Grind on.

Martha stood—but Mary sat ;
Martha murmur'd much at that ;
Martha *cared*—but Mary *heard*,
Listening to the Master's word,
And the Lord her choice preferr'd,
Sit on—hear on.
Work, without God, is labour lost ;
Work on, work on !
Full soon you'll learn it to your cost ;
Toil on, toil on !

Little is much, when God is in it ;
Man's busiest day's not worth God's minute !
Much is little everywhere,
If God the labour do not share ;
So work *with* God, and *nothing's* lost,
Who works with Him, does *best* and *most*,
Work on, work on.

A. A. Rees.

CHAPTER XXII.

SCIENTIFIC THEORY AND SCRIPTURE TESTIMONY.

THERE is no point at which modern scientific theories are in greater conflict with the Scriptures of truth than concerning the assumed antiquity of man. That the earth was originally created by the Word of God is plainly revealed. That it was formed of that which had no prior existence is clearly made known. The sound words in which the Holy Spirit hath spoken are thus given: "By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which do appear" (HEB. xi, 3, R.V).

We need resolutely and intelligently to maintain that which the Word of God lays down as fundamental truth, viz., that God is, and that He is the Almighty Creator. The Lord speaks and it is done, He commands and it stands fast; "by his strength, he setteth fast the mountains, being girded with power" (PSA. lxv, 6). This impreg-

nable position is the believer's stronghold in these days of the opposition of science and modern thought.

That the earth existed before the creation of man upon its surface there is nothing in the Word of God, so far as we know, to contradict. There may have been vast epochs of time between the historic testimony given in the first verse of GENESIS—where it is written: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth;" and the second verse, in which we read: "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Probably the everlasting God has had other uses for this world prior to the existence of man upon its surface. What the Scripture teaches is, that there was a time, however remote, when the world was not; that the matter of which the earth is formed is not eternal, but was created by the word of the living God. Well is it written: "Without faith it is impossible to please God, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (HEB. xi, 16).

The Scriptures likewise clearly teach that "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul (GEN. xxi, 7). Though there may have been a slight breach in chronological data during the time of Israel's history under the Judges, it is conclusively proved that man, according to the testimony of the Word of God, is well-nigh six thousand years old. Taking the present population of the earth at fourteen hundred

millions, it should be remembered that it cannot be shewn that the human race dates back beyond the time of the judgment of the Flood.

To demonstrate this fact, take any six or ten of the nations of the world, ascertain the ratio of the increase of their respective populations, strike an average, and allow liberally for the devastations of war and the diminished increase common to past centuries and heathen conditions, and you cannot work back your diminishing sum so as to reach the days of Adam. You will reach a commencement, or rather a recommencement, of human history about the time of the days of Noah. On the other hand, assume the position of the modern sceptical theorist; affirm that man is fifty thousand years old; take the increase of population at the lowest ascertainable ratio; say, for the sake of illustration, that the numbers are doubled once in three or five or seven hundred years, and the numbers on the earth in such case would be by this time simply incalculable. Instead of the total being fourteen hundred millions, billions of millions would exist.

I have referred to this simple and important statement, in order to shew the hollow character of the modern theorist's speculations concerning the antiquity of man. No doubt, to those who disbelieve the Word of God, and prefer the millions of years necessary to sustain the follies of the evolutionary theory, the readily improvised cataclysms which accomplish such great results, will be appealed to. The student of the Word of God, however, will hold fast to the chronology of the Holy Scriptures, as really as to their Divine authority.

I cannot refrain from stating that I have no sympathy with the common idea that time is running on indefinitely. I do not believe it. It is important to remember that all our time measurements come of divine ordinances and institutions. To the sun we are indebted for the year; to the moon for the month. To the earth's rotary motion upon its own axis, we owe the recurring seasons which we call day and night.

Our timepieces and watches are simply instruments which tabulate and register divinely appointed ordinances. Can it, therefore, be affirmed that the Most High hath no thought of limit, much less of responsibility, in relation to time? He that made a decree concerning the limit and bound of the sea, "that it should not pass over," shall He leave out the bounds and limit of time? He that said: "Behold! I come quickly!" hath not left us in the dark concerning the great question of the course of time.

The passage of Scripture which is usually quoted as though it gave sanction and support to this loose way of thinking is that found in 2 PETER iii, 8, which I observe in the R.V. is thus rendered: "But *forget* not this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Now, instead of this divine statement being used, as it generally is, to support the view that we know nothing concerning the question of time, is it not evident that it was purposely given with directly opposite intention? Thus, for want of careful and intelligent study of the Word of God, many believers are practically blind, or rather, shortsighted, concerning

this great question. They need our Lord's reproving word: "I counsel thee to anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see" (REV. iii, 18).

Now it is nowhere stated in the Scriptures that one day is with the Lord as thirty, or fifty, or a hundred years; neither as four, seven, or nine hundred years; but both Moses and Peter are instructed to teach the Church of God that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." That in the judgment of the Father of eternity, a thousand years are but as a day, we can well understand. Hence, in PSALM xc, verse 4, we read: "For a thousand years in Thy sight are as yesterday, when it is past, and as a watch in the night." Peter also significantly warns: "Be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 PET. iii, 8).

My reader, permit me to ask: Have you been ignorant of this one thing, that we have here a divinely appointed bound and limit to time? The context clearly shews that the Apostle, in these striking words, is replying to those who scoffingly ask: "Where is the promise of His coming, for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were, from the beginning of the creation?" In the light of this fact how remarkable the Apostle's vindication of the seeming delay of the Lord! How important his instruction concerning the position which we occupy on the stream of time.

With reverent interest and joyous expectation we are prepared to ask: Where, in regard to time, are we, in this year of grace 1886? For purposes of simple, and at

the same time intelligent subdivision of the time already past, we recall the fact that the date of the Flood, which marks the first great crisis in the history of man, is given in the year 1656 A.M. From that time to the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ the period embraced is 2348 years. This brings us to the close of the fourth thousand years. The chronology of Archbishop Usher gives the date of the birth of Christ to be the year 4004 A.M. That which finds place in the margin of our reference Bibles shews the year 4004 A.M. Adding 4004 years to the 1886 years of the Christian era, and we reach ANNO DOMINI 5890.

We are therefore close to the last century which completes the 6000 years, or, allowing for the years (estimated as within fifty) which, according to some authorities, were not reckoned in the days of the Judges, we are well into the last century of the sixth thousand years. My conviction is that substantially we are right in regard to the question of date. Fairly looked at, it is difficult to see how there could be loss in the correct enumeration of past years. We are certain, for example, of the year in which our Lord was born. We know perfectly the time of the Cæsars; the overthrow of Jerusalem; the reign of Constantine; the years in which Constantinople shared the Imperial honours with Rome; the times of the dark ages; the Popes of the Roman Catholic Church; the birth and times of Luther; the Reformation; the Louis of France; the Henrys and the Georges of England; the Napoleonic era, and so on—I emphasize it: we know substantially where we are. Nothing would be

more unlikely than the loss of, or the leaving out in historical records, the dates of years. You might almost as easily leave out a part of the metals in a railway line, and not miss them, as omit the years which are passed. In the future it must be true that the year in which we are now living is none other than the year of our Lord, 1886.

At this point, I desire to say that, in my judgment, nothing has brought more discredit upon the glorious theme of the Lord's Second Advent than the unwise attempt at fixing the actual date of our Lord's appearing. Let me not be misunderstood. I am not in the least discrediting the students of prophecy themselves. It is their act, in this particular respect, which is to be deprecated. The Holy Spirit has written it for the instruction of the whole Church throughout all time: "For yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry" (HEB. x, 37). Were I compelled to choose between making statements concerning the time of our Lord's appearing, and being altogether silent, because I do not certainly know, I should choose the former alternative.

Let it be borne in mind that our Lord has not forbidden the careful observance of the certain signs which will immediately precede His coming. On the contrary, He has distinctly commanded our observation and watchfulness, lest that day should overtake us as a thief. His words, often misquoted and little studied, are: "But of that day, and of that hour, knoweth no man; no, not the angels which are in heaven; neither the Son, but the

Father. Take ye heed! watch and pray! for ye know not when the time is" (MARK xiii, 32, 33). It should be carefully noted that it is *the day* and *the hour*, the actual *time* of the crisis, which is here declared to be unknown, except to the Father.

Who can read these words without marking the emphasis which our Lord thereby gives to the great fact of His coming again? Not for a single moment did the Lord countenance the idea that His kingdom was to be only a spiritual state or condition on earth. The testimony I have just quoted entirely accords with His answer given to the disciples after His resurrection. In ACTS i, 6 and 7, we read: "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying: Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them: It is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power." Our Lord did not teach His disciples that their question was a carnal one, or that they were lacking discernment as to the spiritual nature and character of His kingdom. They had not made mistake, "for he cometh, for he cometh, to judge the earth; with righteousness shall he judge the world and the people with his truth" (PSALM xcvi, 13).

Deeply interesting in this connection is the well-known fact that amongst the Jews the following tradition has been and is firmly held, viz., that the six days of creation, which were followed by the Sabbath, are to be regarded as prophetic of human history for 7,000 years. In the Talmud, the materials of which are of great antiquity—many of the writings dating prior

to the first advent of our Lord—we find (SANHEDRIM, p. 97) it stated to this effect: "The world is to last for seven thousand years, viz., two thousand years without order (without the law), two thousand under the law (of Moses), two thousand the years of Messiah, and the seventh thousand the Sabbath." Amongst the Jewish writers who have maintained the coming of the Millennial Age, when the six thousand years have run their course, may be mentioned the Rabbi Kitma, Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Levi, Rabbi Abraham Sebalt, Baal Katurim, and the Jewish Cabbalists.

It is remarkable also that, just as the tradition of the Flood has been found amongst the nations in every part of the habitable globe, so also the testimony concerning the coming kingdom and glory of our Lord. Of course these traditions are not a result of contact with the prophetic Scriptures, but they are deeply interesting as being confirmatory of the views which are here finding expression. The Chaldeans, the Persians, Zoroaster and the Etruscans, Hesiod and Virgil, also bring their mede of testimony. Theopompus, who lived 320 B.C., affirms that the Persian magi taught that the present state of things would last six thousand years; after that would follow an age of peace and happiness.

Gathering, therefore, to something like a focus, the arguments and facts adduced, may we not confidently believe that we are nearing the time of the end of this evil age? What reason have we for supposing that, should three or four centuries longer be continued to human history under any of the conditions which have

been tried and experienced, that the righteousness and goodness of men on the earth would increase? I gravely question whether man, in the sight of God, was ever more utterly guilty (if there can be degrees in the condition named) than he is to-day. Take this country as a striking illustration of national development, as a proof of the vast wealth, remarkable intelligence, and world-wide commercial, political, and social interests which may pertain to an earthly people. Here is a great nation, influencing the whole world by their intelligence, scientific knowledge, and far-reaching industrial prowess. When, however, we ask the question from the standpoint of godliness, righteousness, and truth, what is the influence of this people, in regard to those great questions which are dear to the heart of God, are we not compelled to admit that England's influence has signally failed? I maintain that England has failed to be God's light to the modern world as signally as ever did Israel to the ancient world. I do not believe that the MORAL GOVERNOR OF THE UNIVERSE is going to extend time to conditions which, in every successive age, have been to the advantage of iniquity. The sinners who destroy the earth have had a long innings. In the light of the corrupt conditions which exist throughout the whole world, with the frightful facts before us, of the moral and physical carnage going on everywhere, face to face with the awful truth that three times each century FOURTEEN HUNDRED MILLIONS of human beings die, surely we may ask, Is it not enough? And how long to the end of this dark chapter—this mystery of permitted iniquity?

CHAPTER XXIII.

HUMANITY IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY.

"What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. . . . Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (ROMANS iii, 9-19).

"For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. For if the casting away of them be the reconciling the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert graffed in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be graffed in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be graffed in: for God is able to graff them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert graffed contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be graffed into their own olive tree? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (ROMANS xi, 13-15, 17-25).

Hail to the Lord's Anointed,
Great David's greater Son!
Hail, in the time appointed,
His reign on earth begun!
He comes to break oppression,
To set the captive free,
To take away transgression,
And rule in equity.

He shall come down like showers
Upon the fruitful earth;
Love, joy, and hope, like flowers,
Spring in His path to birth:
Before Him on the mountains,
Shall peace, the herald go;
And righteousness in fountains,
From hill to valley flow.

Kings shall fall down before Him,
And gold and incense bring;
All nations shall adore Him,
His praise all people sing:
For He shall have dominion
O'er river, sea, and shore,
Far as the eagle's pinion,
Or dove's light wing can soar.

O'er every foe victorious,
He on His throne shall rest;
From age to age more glorious,
All blessing and all blest.
The tide of time shall never
His covenant remove;
His name shall stand for ever,
That name to us is—Love.

MONTGOMERY.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HUMANITY IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY.

IT appears to me that, as we look back upon human history, we have conclusive proof that the living God has been permitting the the sons of men the opportunity of proving to themselves their incapacity and unfitness either for personal independence or national government. For six thousand years, nearly, man has been tried and tested in every possible condition. We cannot affect surprise at the result of this trial, for man is a sinner. That a sinner should either rule himself or govern others righteously would indeed be strange, and out of accord with "the nature of things."

This test of man as an individual began first with the head of the human race, and has gone on in all parts of the habitable globe, and has comprehended the experience of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people upon the face of the earth. Every condition has been tried, every

phase of humanity has shared in the experience of sixty centuries. Every degree of physical, moral, and intellectual capacity has had place. From the aboriginal tribes of Australia, Asia, and Africa, with their low type of brain vigour and crude civilisations, to the high class Brahmin, the cultured Roman, the philosophic Greek, all have had place and part. So also the latest illustrations of progress instanced in the experience of the Teutonic and Anglo-Saxon races. It is hardly possible to conceive any condition of which man as an individual is capable, but that condition has again and again existed. In this respect, surely "there is nothing new under the sun."

From the most degrading heathenism of the dark past on the one hand, to the highest manifestations of nineteenth century civilisation on the other, man has had place, part, and opportunity. And what is the burden of evidence furnished by history and experience concerning man as an individual? Truth compels us to take the testimony of the Word of God, endorsed as that judgment is by the witness of facts. We unhesitatingly affirm that, for all the purposes of good, and right, and truth, man has proved an ignominious break-down and failure.

I do not deny that there have been large numbers of individual exceptions to the rule, exceptions induced, be it remembered, through the restraining grace and holy power of the Spirit of God. I am speaking of human nature and life in its vast majorities, in every century throughout the habitable earth. From the standard of a righteous judgment, individual life and character have

been, and continue to be, a melancholy disappointment. The solemn verdict concerning man, not of the Word of God only, but of human experience also, is that he has been "weighed in the balances and found wanting."

Let us enlarge our thought, and pass from the consideration of life as seen in the individual, to life as illustrated in the history of the family. The family is the enlarged life of the individual, the circle of a multiplied individualism. Here again man has been tried in every possible condition. In the direst poverty, in the highest prosperity, in penury and luxury, in hut and hovel, tent and temple, cottage and palace. In rudeness and refinement, on island and continent, in the units of which the marriage state is first formed, or as seen in the enlarging circle which belongs to the fruitful reproduction of human life. Here barbarism and heathenism, as also the highest forms of civilisation, have had place. The time of trial has been ample, and has been permitted under conditions which embrace every variety of experience. Once more we ask, what has been the issue and result? Again, from the standpoint of the judgment of God, and in the solemn light of the facts and verdicts of history, it may be affirmed that human family life has proved in its vast majorities and still declares itself to be, a mournful and melancholy failure.

Enlarge the family, and let us take a survey of the widening circle suggested by what has been known as tribal life, which in its turn gives the growth and development of the family. The same melancholy facts are presented to view. Probably nothing more painful of its

kind is known to human history than the bitter fratricidal strifes, jealousies, cruelties, and ambitions which have been common to the experience of the tribes of the earth.

Again, let our thought enlarge, multiply the tribes until national life has been produced. I am simply appealing to the facts of history when I affirm that the manifestation and development of national life have never induced righteousness. Has it done this, either in ancient or modern times? Let Assyria, Egypt, or Israel, up to date, answer. Let Greece or Rome give evidence. Is Europe at the close of the nineteenth century the abode of truth and righteousness? Are the nations, either in their governments or peoples, ashamed of sin? Are they exalting God, and lifting high the principles and teachings of His Holy Word? We ask the question: Is it possible to identify existing conditions as being in the least in harmony with the will of Christ? The European nations are armed to the teeth, and, as a whole, ready to put ten millions of soldiers on the field of slaughter. The safety of national life and the welfare of society are practically declared to depend upon the existence of armed hosts. War is as popular to-day, despite all our boasted progress, as ever it was. Are these conditions in harmony with the will of God? When our Lord Jesus reigns in power and great glory, as He assuredly will, it is written: "Wars shall cease unto the ends of the earth," that He shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into

pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more (Isa. ii, 4).

Is it not the fact that national history in its turn has been, in all parts and ages of the world, a pitiable spectacle and a splendid failure? The glories of Alexander, of Cæsarism, of Napoleonism, have been those of conquest, generally dictated by corrupt ambition. Their prowess has been that of brute force, in order to personal and selfish ends—those ends being attained through the horrible and devastating slaughter of untold millions of their fellow-men. Nation has risen against nation, kingdom against kingdom, ruthless conquests, cruel and sanguinary wars, have been everywhere pursued. From the days of Nebuchadnezzar, the great despotic king, onward through monarchical and constitutional governments down to our own times, the same testimony of violence, corruption, and failure is heard. Six thousand years of human rule, nationally considered, is closing amid universal disquiet, unrest, and fear. Not a single European Government rules in righteousness to-day! Equally true is the solemn fact that there is not a single nation, country, metropolis, city, town, or hamlet on the face of the earth where the principles of Divine government are accepted or maintained. This result has appropriately followed: whatever mutual confidence and respect have existed or do exist, is not determined by right and truth, but by the power which each possesses to fight, withstand, and overcome. Neither is there any improvement in the motives which actuate governments in regard to war. The criminality of England, *e.g.*, in re-

gard to the recent Chinese opium war, was never exceeded. The dark deeds which have been committed in the past know nothing more inherently and utterly vile. The love of money, under the name and guise of England's commercial necessity, forced this horrible war.

It is important to bear in mind that there is no form of government possible to man which has not again and again been tried. Deeply interesting is the remarkable fact that the verge of the last century of the six thousand years of human history sees the New World (America) yielding the latest exhibition of national life in a manifold and complex sense. English, German, Irish, French, Italian, Chinese, Asian, and African, indeed all Old World national life, is being incorporated in the structure of the United States Republic. Can this latest manifestation of human government be pronounced a success? Are the great cities of the United States eminent for righteousness and the diminution and unpopularity of iniquity? With two of her noblest Presidents recently assassinated, with her past governments notorious for their shameless corruption, is it not true to affirm that the drift of government in the New World has not been and *is not the way of God?*

I have no desire to speak ungenerously of a great people among whom I love to preach Christ, and for whom in many respects I have a great regard; but after two somewhat lengthened visits, I cannot say that I have returned to England at all enamoured of American democracy. I shall scarcely be believed when I affirm that in the year 1884 no less than three thousand three

hundred and seventy-seven men and women were either murdered or met violent deaths at the hands of their fellows. Such, however, is the truth, the figures being taken from the United States' record of committed crime for that year. This is an appalling fact, indicating a condition of latter-day lawlessness and a disregard for the sacredness of human life both fearful and terrible. I believe I am right in saying that in England, with her thirty-seven millions of inhabitants, less than one hundred and fifty murders were committed in 1884. The United States, with her fifty-seven millions, had more than three thousand. Not less alarming is the laxity of the law, evidenced in the fact that one hundred and eleven only of these murderers suffered the penalty of the Divine law, which dogmatically says: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed" (GEN. ix, 6).

In the great majority of the American cities the Lord's Day is the principal day for theatrical entertainments and public sports, whilst, with scarcely an exception, elaborate and large editions of the Sunday newspaper are everywhere and always issued. This is not confined to what we in England should call the Sunday newspaper, but it is precisely as though the London *Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Standard*, *Daily News*, and *Chronicle* were to publish as large, or, as in many cases, a larger edition on the Lord's Day than upon any other morning of the week. Beside this, the Sunday issue is regarded as the special medium for making known the aggregate of the terrible crimes which have been committed.

In one large city a prominent judge told me that the

year 1884 yielded no less than three Divorce Court cases a day. This gives, in round numbers, 1,100 cases of divorce in what may be called the better class section of the population, which in that city certainly does not exceed 100,000, including men, women, and children. Preaching in one of the prisons of the same city, I counted no less than twenty-three murderers in one row of cells.

In the light of these facts, can it be contended that the latter end of the nineteenth century shows man, nationally considered, to be improving, or approximating to good and righteous government? Is not the testimony and evidence one of continued and sadly consistent failure? Whether we go back to ancient times, and mark the rise and progress of the nations whose corruptions, growing with their development, brought about their overthrow and extinction, or whether we contemplate modern national life in any portion of the habitable globe, is it not patent to every observer that, so far humanity has proved itself utterly incompetent to righteous government? Has not man's subsequent history proved incontestably the truth of that which God's Word affirms, that "by one man's disobedience sin entered into the world" (Rom. v, 12), that all have sinned, that all flesh has corrupted its way upon the earth, and everywhere man has endorsed and followed the sin and disobedience committed by the head of the human race?

Is not human history proved to be the accentuation and proof of Scripture testimony? Can we wonder that God is about to close the long, dark chapter of human

iniquity? Can we be surprised that He is about to withdraw governmental power from the hands of sinful and corrupt men? Shall we not adore His wisdom and goodness in that He has invested all governmental power and authority in His blessed Son? The Apostle Paul puts the question and issue very clearly. Directing our attention to the coming of God's Sovereign King, he says: "That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which *in His times* He shall show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords (1 TIM. vi, 14, 15).

The great crisis draws near when the Lord Jesus Christ shall "dash in pieces like a potter's vessel" all existing corrupt governmental power (PSALM ii, 9; REV. ii, 27). We are looking for the fulfilment of the words of the prophet Daniel: "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them in pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone (Christ) that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (DAN. ii, 34, 35).

Our eyes are fixed upon that which is at once the hope of the Church and the deliverance of the world from its bondage of corruption, viz., "the glorious appearing of the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (TITUS ii, 13). We await with intense expectancy the

arrival of that supreme crisis. There cannot be any room to mistake that appearing. It is written, and it shall be so fulfilled: "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the *trump* of God." "And the seventh angel sounded the last trump, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the *kingdom of our God and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever.*" Compare 1 Cor. xv, 52, and Rev. xi, 15, when it will be seen that the seventh and last trump are identical.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE LAST TRUMP.

"Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation" (LEVIT. xxiii, 24).

"And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof; it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. A jubile shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed. For it is the jubile; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field. In the year of this jubile ye shall return every man unto his possession" (LEVIT. xxv, 8-13).

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (REV. xi, 15).

A SONG OF PRAISE.

Come, saints, praise the Lamb, His mercies proclaim,
Let's lift up our voice and rejoice in His name ;
His love to the Church, which He purchased with blood
To make her His Bride and the Temple of God.

When wandering far from the Father's abode,
The heart full of pride, and hatred to God,
The children of darkness, of Satan the slaves,
'Twas Jesus redeem'd us—His merit that saves.

Our sins on the Cross He on Calvary bore,
He blotted them out to be mentioned no more ;
Now pardoned and cleansèd we boldly draw near,
And cry, "Abba, Father !" unhindered by fear.

Despised by the world, we are strangers below,
But callèd to heaven we cheerfully go ;
The Lord is our Leader ; and, strong in His might,
Though Satan opposes, we fight the good fight.

We look for the day when Jesus shall come,
And take all His blood-purchased brethren home,
When we shall behold all His glory and grace,
And our heaven be found in the light of His face.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE LAST TRUMP.

IT not unfrequently happens that an argument which is supposed to be in direct opposition to the views which are here finding defence and exposition, is found, upon examination, strongly to sustain them. Such an argument is that where reference is made to the "last trump." This expression is constantly quoted as though it sustained, nay, *proved*, the view of a general resurrection and the final judgment at the end of the world.

Let us carefully examine the words quoted. They are found in 1 Cor. xv, 51-53. The Apostle has been speaking of the certainty of the resurrection and of the actual crisis when our Lord shall appear. He adds: "Behold! I shew you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the TRUMPET shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

To shew the importance which is attached to the sounding of the trumpet, let us refer to MATTHEW xxiv, 30, 31, where it is written: "And then shall appear the sign of the SON OF MAN in heaven; and then shall all the kindreds of the earth mourn; and they shall see the SON OF MAN coming in the clouds of heaven with power and glory, and He shall send His angels with a great sound of a TRUMPET, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." So also in 1 THESS. iv, 15-17: "For this we say unto you, by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent (precede) them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the TRUMP of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Now the key which opens this door through which the coming glory streams, is found in the hands of the holy seer, whose vision was the clearer because a prisoner for Christ and His truth in the island of Patmos. In the REVELATION given to the beloved John—chapter viii, 2—we read: "And I saw seven angels, which stood before God, and to them were given seven TRUMPETS." At the sixth verse also: "And the seven angels, which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound."

Now notice, in the seventh verse we read: "The first angel sounded;" the eighth verse: "And the second angel

sounded;" the tenth verse: "And the third angel sounded;" the twelfth verse: "And the fourth angel sounded." Now at the first verse of the ninth chapter: "And the fifth angel sounded;" at the thirteenth verse we read: "The sixth angel sounded." Where shall we look for the sounding of the seventh and last TRUMPET? Carefully observe the marvellous words found in chap. xi, at the fifteenth verse: "And the seventh angel sounded, and there followed great voices in heaven, saying: The kingdoms of the world are become THE KINGDOM of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever" (R.V.).

Could anything be more conclusive as to the meaning of the expression and the time of the sounding of the "last trump"? Far from being indicative of the end of all things, the context shews that, when the last trump is sounded, the dead in Christ will be raised, and the living saints instantly changed, and all these unitedly will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Now these great events take place in view of the Millennial reign, and are contemporary with the last days of this evil age. Our Lord will not reign apart from His people. This is the supreme juncture at which He comes to receive His people to Himself, that where He is there we may be also (JOHN xiv, 2, 3).

In confirmation of this, let us carefully notice the Apostle's words: "Then shall be brought to pass the saying which is written: Death is swallowed up in victory." What saying is this, and why quoted at this time? We turn with expectant interest to ISAIAH xxv, 8, to find that

here a glorious prophecy of Millennial times is given. Hearken to the glowing language of the seraphic prophet, as he portrays this wondrous victory over death. Untold millions of the redeemed at this time are raised in glory by the mighty power of the Lord (1 THESS. iv, 17, 18).

Well does he write: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined; and He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail (unbelief) that is spread over all nations. He will SWALLOW UP DEATH IN VICTORY, and the Lord God will wipe all tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall be taken away from the earth, for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day: Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation" (verses 6-9).

Note the Apostle, also, in that wonderful 8th of Romans. Knowing, as he knew, the glory which is to be revealed: for had he not seen that glory? Nay, more, had not he himself been REGENERATED through the sudden appearing of the glory of Christ? (ACTS ix, 3-6; xxvi, 13). Surely his words literally overflow with the unutterable fulness of the promise. He thus writes: "The Spirit himself (R.V.) beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together: for I

reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God" (Rom. viii, 16-19).

Yes, indeed, for the coming of Christ and the contemporary manifestation of the Sons of God, the world and the Church is waiting! Here is the secret of the patience of God. It is for this His longsuffering continues. "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry" (Hab. ii, 3).

Let it be carefully borne in mind that, until the time of the manifestation of the Sons of God, the kingdom of Christ on earth remains in "mystery." "The world knoweth us not, because it knew him not;" but that supreme hour draweth nigh in which the whole creation which groaneth and travaileth in pain together (with us) until now, shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God (Rom. viii, 20-24).

For this supreme crisis we wait; to this stupendous issue our thought and labour is directed. For this we preach and pray. To this end we hasten His coming, His kingdom, and His glory. Because of this magnificent inauguration of His reign over the whole earth, we beseech our fellow believers to carry the tidings of His salvation and His coming to the ends of the earth. Let the nations which sit in darkness see and hear the Gospel of His glory. Bid the heralds of the Cross tell of the

sufferings of Him Who "died, the just for the unjust, to bring us unto God"; nor fail to shew the glory which He hath appointed to follow. Content to say with Paul, in regard to this evil age: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world;" nevertheless, let our anthem sound out to all believers: "For ye have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, THEN shall ye also appear with him in glory" (GAL. vi, 14; COL. iii, 3, 4).

In this connection I ask the reader's careful attention to our Lord's words: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness to all nations; and then shall the end come" (MATT. xxiv, 14). Let it be remembered that there is not one regularly constituted and acknowledged nation on the face of the whole earth where the Gospel of Christ has not been preached. Is not the end nigh?

CHAPTER XXV.

EXPOSITION OF MATTHEW XXIV AND XXV.

"Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him. The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word. The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left. Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake. The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the trangression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously" (ISAIAH xxiv, 1-6, 17-23).

A LITTLE WHILE.

"For yet a little while."—Heb. x, 37.

"A little while," our Lord shall come,
And we shall wander here no more ;
He'll take us to His Father's home,
Where He for us has gone before—
To dwell with Him, to see His face,
And sing the glories of His grace.

"A little while ;"—He'll come again ;
Let us the precious hours redeem ;
Our only grief to give Him pain,
Our joy to serve and follow Him.
Watching and ready may we be,
As those that long their Lord to see.

"A little while"—'t will soon be past,
Why should we shun the promised cross ?
O let us in His footsteps haste,
Counting for Him all else but loss :
O how will recompense His smile,
The sufferings of this "little while."

"A little while"—come, Saviour, come !
For Thee Thy Bride has tarried long ;
Take Thy poor waiting pilgrims home,
To sing the new eternal song ;
To see Thy glory, and to be
In everything conformed to Thee !

CHAPTER XXV.

EXPOSITION OF MATTHEW XXIV AND XXV.

TO the thoughtful student of prophecy, no portion of the Holy Scripture will be more carefully pondered than the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of the Gospel of MATTHEW. Their relation to the coming again of our Great King have this high claim : they give the very words of our Lord Himself. It is difficult to apprehend the dismay which must have possessed the minds of His disciples when our Lord uttered His last solemn testimony against the Scribes and Pharisees, contained in the twenty-third chapter. Leaving the Jewish house and people for the last time, our Lord, speaking to Israel and to Jerusalem, used these awful words : "Behold ! your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say : Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord !" (MATT. xxiii, 38, 39).

Solemn words: "YOUR HOUSE!" No longer does our Lord recognize it.

The twenty-fourth chapter opens thus: "And Jesus went out and departed from the temple; and his disciples came to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them: See ye not all these things? Verily, I say unto you, there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives the disciples came unto him privately, saying: When shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" ("consummation of the age"—R.V., *margin*).

Clearly we have here a threefold question: (1) "When shall these things be?"—*i.e.*, the desolation of the Jewish house, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the "throwing down" of the goodly temple.* (2) "What shall be the sign of thy coming?" And (3) "the end," or consummation, (not of the world, but) "of the age." The answer to these enquiries is the burden of the testimony of the chapters to which we now refer. That they contain more than the questions involve, is no doubt true; but the replies of our Lord, in my judgment, are limited to the interval which lies between His ascension and His coming again at the end of this evil age.

For, observe! There is not in either of these chapters ONE SINGLE WORD which refers to the Millennial Age. There is no indication of any reign in righteousness. There is no widespread diffusion of the Gospel; no earth filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord; no

* *See* Chapter xxxv, *post*.

Lord Jesus Christ, as King, reigning in righteousness; no peoples calling Him blessed; no days in which the righteous flourish; no peace on earth; no nations ceasing to learn war; no decline of iniquity. Search to see whether these things are so? We do not desire your faith to stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

The melancholy opposite of all this is delineated with all the solemnity of "the faithful witness, Jesus Christ." Take special note of the words which follow: "deceivers;" "false Christs;" "wars;" "evil rumours and troubles;" "nation rising against nation;" "kingdom against kingdom;" "famines;" "pestilences;" "earthquakes;" "terrible oppression, affliction, betrayal, and persecution, unto death;" "hatred;" "false prophets;" "abounding iniquity;" "love waxing cold." These are spoken of as "the beginning of sorrows" (verses 4-12).

Then follows the testimony concerning the "abomination of desolation standing in the holy place," the necessity in those days for instant flight, with a charge not on any account to return. Then these emphatic words: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (verse 21)—times so terrible, that "for the elect's sake," the Lord adds, "those days shall be shortened" (verse 22).

Then greater deception: "False Christs, false prophets, deceiving with great wonders" (verse 24). Then false cries concerning Christ's coming: "In the desert and the secret place" (verse 26); and so right on until the end of the age. For our Lord Himself says: "Immediately

after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heaven shall be shaken; and then shall appear the sign of the SON OF MAN in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the SON OF MAN coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory" (verses 29, 30). So also in the whole of the verses which follow, wherein our Lord accentuates the certainty of His statements by likening the days of His appearing and glory to the times of Noah, when the sudden judgment of the flood destroyed them all (verses 31-51).

The last days of this evil age shew the servants of the Lord in conditions of special trial and danger. They are solemnly warned in almost every verse (37-51 inclusive). Reminded again and again of His coming, with loving persistency they are exhorted to faithfulness in view of His return. Beyond this our Lord finds it necessary to add: "But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart: my Lord delayeth His coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (verses 50, 51).

The 25th chapter opens with the great fact of our Lord's personal return. Carefully notice the emphatic word "THEN"; that is, at that special time or crisis. "THEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth to meet

the bridegroom ; and five of them were wise and five were foolish" (verses 1-12).

The reader will recall to mind the fact that this parable accentuates the testimony of the parable of the nobleman (LUKE xix, 12). As there we have the ten servants, so here we have but ten virgins ; and alas, alas, five of these mere professors. Instead of the world being converted by the preaching of the Gospel, this parable clearly shews that our Lord's coming finds the wise virgins asleep, and needing to arise and trim their lamps in response to the midnight cry, "Behold the bridegroom cometh ! Go ye out to meet him" (verse 6).

How solemnly true is this statement concerning the times in which we live. The wise virgins themselves slumbering, many of the watchmen—many ministers—not only sleeping and needing to be awakened, but drugged into insensibility in regard to the solemn truth of our Lord's return by the twin opiates of worldliness and modern scepticism. Let the voice of the prophet be heard, saying : "Enquire ye, enquire ye : watchman, what of the night ? What of the night ?" and the reply may be heard : "We account those who preach and teach the pre-Millennial advent of Christ as fanatical disturbers of the peace of the Church." Thus has the Church and the world been lulled into an awful slumber.

Well might Paul write : "Yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. When they shall say : Peace and safety ! then sudden destruction cometh, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape" (1 THESS. v, 2, 3).

No less than five times does our Lord warn of His coming being as sudden and unexpected as when the thief comes. To such lengths did the Lord Jesus Christ know that this practical infidelity in regard to His personal return would reach, that He said: "That day shall come as a snare upon all them that dwell upon the face of the earth" (LUKE xxi, 35; 1 THESS. v, 2, 3).

How suggestive the words: "The Bridegroom came and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut" (verse 10). How exactly, they accord with the words which I have emphasised in the chapter on "The Rapture of Firstfruits." Here, in my judgment, we have the translation of THE RESIDUE of the firstfruits, and which becomes to the earth the sign of the approach of the SON OF MAN in power and great glory (MATT. xxiv, 30). Certainly the marriage supper of the Lamb is not to be celebrated on earth. The incorruptible beauty of the Body of Christ will first of all be manifested in the Holy Father's presence, probably in the Holy City which John saw coming down from God out of heaven, as a bride adorned for her husband (REV. xxi, 2).

Though we do not speak positively on this point, we believe that this Holy City is that of which Christ said: "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." Who that loves to commune with the MAN in the glory, with Him to whom we are betrothed, can fail to dwell upon these inspiring words: "In my Father's house are many

mansions, If it were not so, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you." The place of His preparation: the real, tangible, and local home of His bride, the palace of the King of Glory (JOHN xiv, 2, 3).

Guided by His unerring word, imagination lends her swift and strong wing to bear the spirit into the many mansions of the Father's house. Educated in the lowly sphere of earth, we are not WHOLLY ignorant even here of that which great wealth, wisdom, and love in costly combination can produce. By comparison, we gather somewhat of the grandeur and magnificence which must attach to the works which result from His power, glory, and love. Nineteen centuries of absence, nineteen hundred years of His wondrous workmanship spent in the preparation of the palace of the King, the home for His Church.

How precious the wondrous words: "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it: that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word; that He might present it (her) to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing: but that it (she) should be holy and without blemish" (EPHES. v, 25-27).

Well may the beloved Apostle who leaned upon the breast of our Lord write, concerning the marriage festival of our glorious King: "And a voice came out of the throne saying, Praise our God, all ye His servants; and ye that fear Him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings,

saying: Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth; let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me: Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me: These are the true sayings of God" (REV. xix, 5-9).

In closing our study of the parable of the ten virgins, I would call special attention to the 13th verse: "Watch, therefore: for ye know neither the day, nor the hour, wherein the SON OF MAN cometh."

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE THREE SESSIONS OF JUDGMENT.

PART I.—THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST.

"Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low: and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, and upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall, and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. And the idols he shall utterly abolish. And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of" (ISAIAH ii, 10-22).

Come, Jesus Lord, with holy fire,
Come, and my quickened heart inspire,
  Cleansed by Thy precious blood.
Now to my soul Thyself reveal,
Thy mighty working let me feel,
  Since I am born of God.

Let nothing now my heart divide,
Since with Thee I am crucified,
  And live to God in Thee.
Dead to the world and all its toys,
Its idle pomp, and fading joys,
  Jesus, my glory be.

Me with a quenchless thirst inspire,
A longing, infinite desire,
  And fill my craving heart.
Less than Thyself, oh, do not give;
In might, Thyself within me live,
  Come, all Thou hast and art.

My will be swallowed up in Thee,
Light in Thy light still may I see
  In Thine unclouded face.
Called the full strength of trust to prove,
Let all my quickened heart be love,
  My spotless life be praise.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE THREE SESSIONS OF JUDGMENT.

PART I.—THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST.

IN this connection a clear statement concerning the future sessions of divine judgment will be timely and pertinent. These are three in number, and they are found in the Scriptures in the following order: The first, the judgment-seat of Christ, for His people only, shortly after they have risen to meet Him in the air (1 COR. iii, 13-15; 2 COR. v, 10). The second: the judgment of the living nations by the SON OF MAN when He comes *with* His people in power and great glory (MATT. xxv, 31). The third: "the judgment of the great white throne" (REV. xx, 11-15). The first, the *Bemah*, or judgment-seat of Christ, precedes the second by a space of time not exceeding seven years. The third is separated from the second by a subsequent interval of a thousand years.

The first has reference to the members of the Body of Christ only. The second comprehends the living nations, and those saved by Christ during the latest part of the great tribulation, and subsequent to the rapture of the dead and living saints. At this august assize the confederated and corrupt governmental power of the world is utterly broken and judged. Satan is bound and shut up in prison (REV. xx, 1, 2). The Antichrist and the false prophet are cast alive into the lake of fire (REV. xix, 20).

The third and final session comprehends the judgment of the whole of the wicked dead, from the days of Cain onward to the end of the Millennial Age. It will take in all those who, during the Millennial Age, make choice of the service of sin, and neglect the eternal life and glory which the Lord will still graciously impart. It will comprehend all who have part in the final revolt from the government of our Lord, brought about through the subtlety and power of the devil in his last brief season of liberty, granted when the thousand years are fulfilled (REV. xx, 7-10). The devil also at this final judgment is cast into the lake of fire, where he joins his former coadjutors, the beast and the false prophet, and they are tormented day and night for ever and ever (verse 10).

Now concerning these coming sessions of judgments I ask my reader's most careful consideration. One of the advantages which flow from an intelligent knowledge of dispensational truth and the purposes of God disclosed in the Scriptures, is that we are enabled to give to every man an answer and reason for that which we know and believe (1 PETER iii, 3-15).

As an illustration of the importance of this, it may be mentioned that not long since, the writer was speaking with one who has unhappily imbibed a good deal of rationalistic teaching. Shakespeare and others are regarded as being equally inspired with the writers of the Word of God. In order to defend his position, he referred to some of the prophecies of the minor prophets as never having been fulfilled. He seemed startled when this was frankly admitted. These Scriptures had been quoted against the certainty of the knowledge of the prophets, and consequently against the fact of their inspiration. When I pointed out their dispensational character, and shewed that these Scriptures could not have been fulfilled, seeing the time was not yet come, the objector seemed surprised. The Bible must be in indescribable confusion to the man who does not know its design, structure, course, and purpose.

We proceed to a careful consideration of the first of the three sessions of judgment, viz., the Judgment-Seat of Christ. The subjects are the Lord's people only. The scene is fixed in His presence. This is not a session of judgment in any penal sense. The great question of the salvation or loss of the soul is not determined here. It is the account of stewardship which is rendered to the Lord, and results either in great reward or serious loss. It is the "*Bemah*," or place of manifestation for the servants of Christ, which is described by the Apostle in these words: "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive for the things done in his body,

according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. v, 10).

Do not let it be supposed that I am denying that all men shall give account of themselves to God. I am carefully considering the words quoted in the light of the context. The whole argument of the Apostle, from the first to the tenth verse, shews that he is dealing with believers, with the saved—those in whom God had wrought, who had received the Holy Ghost, and with Him all the blessed and solemn responsibility involved (verse 5).

Of every soul begotten of God, whose body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, it is written: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made them free from the law of sin and death." (Romans viii, 1, 2). To the weakest, as well as the strongest believer in Christ, the conclusive words are spoken: "Verily, verily, I say unto you: He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into the judgment, but is passed from death unto life" (John v, 24, R.V.). The judgment of the sin of the believer was borne by the substitute and surety, Jesus Christ the Lord. On this ground, and on this ground alone, the believer is free from sin, and is justified, sanctified, and glorified (Rom. v, 9, 10).

Though all this is absolutely true, each believer, as a child of God, is responsible to Jesus Christ as his Lord and King. There is no proof of living faith where that lordship in life and works is denied. The truth is that

the hour which through faith in Christ saw an end to our condition as condemned sinners, saw the commencement of our personal responsibility as the holy brethren of the exalted Lord. For the deeds done in the body after regeneration we are amenable to Him, whether *they be good or bad.* Everything henceforth has reference to Him. Whether eating, drinking, sleeping or working—everything, everywhere, has relation to Him and is known by Him. "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's" (ROM. xiv, 8).

In deep interest, I ask my reader to study this whole question of stewardship, assured that, according to the measure of our faithfulness to the Lord will the positions of honour and glory be which we occupy during the Millennial Age. I commend the whole of 1 CORINTHIANS iii to most prayerful attention. There we read these striking words: "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereupon. But let every man *take heed* how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest" (verses 10-13).

No doubt there is here special reference to faithful ministry. The principle laid down, however, has reference to our whole life. What startling and momentous words are these! See! every man a builder! Each

one erecting on the foundation. Some building on Christ, gold, silver, precious stones. Mark it well! Three precious things. Some building on Christ, wood, hay, stubble. Mark it well! Three things the very opposite of precious.

Oh, child of God! Oh, heir of glory! Be careful of thy superstructure, for it is written: thy "work shall be manifested; the day *shall* declare it; because it *shall* be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is" (verse 13). Brother, is it gold, silver, and precious stones which you are building on the glorious foundation? Is it the gold suited to His divine glory? The silver of redemption's mighty price? The precious stones of a loving and recognized association with all His holy brethen? Will these, as the result of thy measure of patient working, sparkle upon the expanding breast of the Great High Priest? Art thou yielding the gold of pure doctrine; the silver of a redeemed and consecrated life; the precious stones which thou hast won for the bosom and brow of thy Lord—are these the intrinsic values which thou art carefully building on Him, in view of that day? For your encouragement, I remind you of His word: "If any man's work abide, which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward" (verse 14). Not salvation observe, but *reward*. Salvation is not a reward; it is of grace, not of works. Salvation is God's free and sovereign gift (JOHN iv, 10; ROM. vi, 23).

We do not believe that the child of God, who, in order to that relationship has been begotten of God, and made

a partaker of the divine nature, will ever lose eternal life. The loss of eternal life by its possessor is a contradiction in terms. Obviously we cannot lose that which is an eternal possession. But we *do believe* that it is true that the child of God may, through want of faithfulness to His Lord, after his conversion, lose an exceeding great reward. Oh, this question of reward, as distinguished from the salvation of the soul, how it needs pointing out, teaching, and emphasizing.

Mark once more the solemn testimony: "If any man's work be burned, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (verse 13). This fearful burning up; this saving as by fire; how terrible! Thou Mighty and Gracious Lord, save us from such a salvation. Men and women redeemed of the Lord, deliver yourselves from this diminished salvation.

To this end, see to your personal work, your own building upon the foundation! Is it meet to build on that living foundation, *wood*, *hay*, *stubble?* Will you tempt the Lord by asking Him to bear the dead weight of lifelessness? Is dead wood fitted to have part in the Tree of Life? For a house composed wholly of living stones, are wooden formalities, is dead ritual, fitted? Is it seemly that any *other result than burning* should, in such a case, have place? Is it not a great mercy that the fire consumes? But mark well the issue: Instead of reward thou sufferest loss (verse 15).

My reader, I beseech you, hear my words. I speak to myself also. Shall we henceforth bring to that holy and living foundation "wood, hay, or stubble"? Shall we,

dare we bring the withered grass of past profession? The faded flowers of man's natural comeliness? Dare we recognise the refined condition of unregenerate man, concerning which God says: "All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness of man as the flower of the field," as fitted for union with the living Christ? Is it seemly that we, who have been made partakers of the divine nature, should, apart from the new birth, be content to recognise as children of God those of whom it is written: "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God"? (ROM. viii, 8).

Shall we bring stubble for building on the living foundation? Stubble! What is that? The dead roots of former life. The old lusts, perchance, which, like the Gibeonites in Joshua's time, come to us in their old shoes and clouted (JOSH. ix, 3-6) They deceive us, they consume our time, enswathe our feet, hinder our walk, pamper our appetites, and, under pretence of tribute to our spiritual life, will draw either wood or water, provided we spare them the bitterness of death. Stubble! What is that? Lifeless rootings which need the plough for extraction, the harrow for separation, the fire for burning, and the ashes to tell of a clean consumption. Stubble! What is that? Not seldom, the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things, which entering in, choke the word! (MATT. xiii, 22; 1 TIM. vi, 9, 10).

And shall we dare to build stubble on that living foundation? What fellowship hath Christ with death? How shall we mingle the heavenly wheat corn with the dead stubble of a corrupt and corrupting world? Stubble!

What is that? Not seldom the withered fancies of dead men's brains, teaching given out of the natural enmity which unrenewed hearts have against the doctrine of Christ. Stubble! What is that? Perchance the picture of demoralised Christians, who have become ensnared by the fashion of this world, by romance, by pleasure, or the current theories of modern doubt.

Solemnly and affectionately, I appeal to my readers to heed the language of the wise master-builder: "Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." Beware of *fire* and *the loss* at the judgment-seat of Christ. It is difficult to present the thought suggested by this sharp, crisp word: "loss." How shall we understand its meaning, and grasp its teaching? Let an illustration have place. Seest thou that redeemed man, saved and made the possessor of eternal life? His very responsibility to Christ implies immense power either to gain or lose. He has become careless, worldly, and prayerless. Many times has he grieved the Holy Spirit. Now his conscience has lost its sensitiveness, and were it not for his own self-judgment and the testimony of Christ, we might fear that he would be judged and condemned with the world (*see* 1 Cor. xi, 31, 32). Perchance he is "delivered unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord." He dies. What then? He stands to render his account at the judgment-seat of Christ. Well, and then? His works—every item in his life—his life after conversion, which had not reference to Christ, is burned up. And what then? He himself is saved; yet so as by fire, whatever that awful word may mean (1 Cor. iii, 13-18).

It will be urged that the statements of Scripture to which I have directed attention shew the unfaithful servants to be present at the same scene of judgment as the faithful ones, and the question may be asked: How can this be, if believers only are at the judgment-seat of Christ? (*see* MATT. xxv, 24-30; LUKE xix, 20-24). The answer to this apparent difficulty is, that for the purposes of solemn warning, such construction of these parables was necessary, in order to bring out clearly the intention of our Lord. In the case, *e.g.*,—which is an apposite one—of the man which had not on the wedding garment, we do not understand that our Lord intended to teach that a man did really enter the heavenly scene of festivity, and that he was there seen, then rejected, and taken away by the command of the King (MATT. xxii, 11-13). The object in both of these cases, and in every similar instance, is to emphasize the solemn fact that all mere professors, unreality and hypocritical pretence, will meet and merit rejection and doom at the hands of the faithful and Holy Lord (MATT. xxiv, 48-51).

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE THREE SESSIONS OF JUDGMENT.

PART II.—THE JUDGMENT OF THE SON OF MAN.

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered! and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the king shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into eternal life" (MATT. xxv, 31-46).

Lo! He comes with clouds descending,
Once for favoured sinners slain;
Thousand, thousand saints attending,
Swell the triumph of His train:
Hallelujah!
God appears on earth to reign.

Every eye shall now behold Him,
Robed in dreadful majesty;
Those who set at naught, and sold Him,
Pierced and nailed Him to the tree,
Deeply wailing,
Shall the true Messiah see.

Now redemption, long expected,
See in solemn pomp appear!
All His saints, by man rejected,
Now shall meet Him in the air:
Hallelujah!
See the day of God appear!

Yea, Amen, let all adore Thee,
High on Thine eternal throne;
Saviour! take the power and glory,
Claim the kingdoms for Thine own.
O come quickly,
Everlasting God, come down!

C. WESLEY AND CENNICK.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE THREE SESSIONS OF JUDGMENT.

PART II.—THE JUDGMENT OF THE SON OF MAN.

THE second great session of judgment is that of the living nations. The testimony is thus given: "When the SON OF MAN shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand and the goats on His left. Then shall the King (observe, no longer the SON OF MAN) say unto them on His right hand: Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (MATT. xxv, 31-34).

This august assize will comprehend the living Gentile nations, or Christendom. The SON OF MAN, manifested

in power and great glory as God's King, will be the judge. The object of this judgment is to break up all existing governmental rule and authority. The Lord will dash in pieces, as a potter's vessel, the kings and world rulers who will be gathered together under the despotic sway of the Antichrist. The governmental commercial and social conditions of the world at this time will be utterly corrupt and godless. The atheistic blasphemy of those days, which is specially directed against the government of God and His Christ, is thus portrayed in PSALM ii: "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying: Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his hot displeasure" (verses 2-5).

Then follows the announcement, that the fixed time for divine government determined by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has arrived. The Lord of heaven thus speaks: "Yet have I set MY KING upon my holy hill of Zion." The anointed one—the ADONAI, the Son of the Blessed One—into whose hands all governmental power now passes, is now heard: "I will declare the decree: The Lord (Jehovah) hath said unto me: Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee; ask of me, and I shall give the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Ps. ii, 2, 8). Now have arrived the times of the restitution of all things. The supreme hour is come, in which all property and

power passes into the hands of Him whose right it is, fulfilling the Apostle's words: "Which in his times he shall shew who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. vi, 15, 16). No longer shall the usurper triumph; or power, wealth, and beauty minister to unholy lust. No longer shall vast wealth be found in the hands of supremely selfish men; nor shall squalid poverty, degrading ignorance, or immoral social conditions exist. No longer shall the broad and beautiful lands of the British Isles or Empire, or the world, be locked up to the luxurious and idle splendour of a small minority. Now is fulfilled the promise of Peter to the Jewish people: "And he (God) shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you" (Acts iii, 20, 21).

From the conclusive testimony of the prophet Zechariah, as well as from our Lord, we learn that the terrific events of manifested wrath and judgment which now occur take place in the vicinity of Jerusalem. The words of the Holy One of Israel are thus given: "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. In that day, saith the Lord, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness. And the governors of Judah shall say in

their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the Lord of hosts their God" (ZECH. xii, 2-5).

"In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf: and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand, and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem. The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah. In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn" (verses 6-10).

Specially note here the following passage: "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken and the houses rifled, and the women ravished, and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he

fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof towards the east and towards the west, and there shall be a very great valley ; half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south" (ZECH. xiv, 1-4).

According to some writers, these wonderful Scriptures were fulfilled at the time of the overthrow of Jerusalem by the Romans under Titus, in the year 70, A.D., but what ignorance of the facts such statements involve ! There was no sparing of the residue of the people or partial taking of the city when Titus overthrew it. The Lord did not go forth and war against Rome, neither were the nations assembled there. Rome was terribly successful in that awful siege. The Lord did not stand upon the Mount of Olives in A.D. 70, nor did the Mount cleave in twain. There was no fleeing of the people on account of terrible earthquake eruption. There was no coming of the Lord with all His saints. There was no overthrow of the confederate kings ; neither any gathering of all nations to battle.

I deprecate any thing which savours of severity of expression, but I cannot help affirming that the statement that this prophecy was fulfilled in the overthrow of Jerusalem is utterly destitute of foundation in truth. Such trifling with the great words of God, in my judgment, does more to foster scepticism than the most outspoken unbelief.

It will not fail to strike the reader how great similarity in principle and fact there is between the testimony quoted from Zechariah and the words used in Matthew xxv, concerning the judgment of the living nations by the

glorified and enthroned SON OF MAN. Indeed, there can be no question that these scenes are identical.

This second session of judgment transpires not less than three and a half years, and not more than seven years, subsequent to the judgment-seat of Christ, which, as we have seen, is exclusively for His saints. As I have already indicated, the heathen nations are not judged at this time. They are given to Christ as a part of His inheritance (Ps. ii, 8). Multitudes of these have never heard of our Lord, neither have they rejected His Gospel. Christendom has allowed them to sit in darkness and to perish.

Indeed, Isaiah distinctly declares that the Lord will after the day of His wrath send the escaped of Israel, as heralds of His coming and glory, among the heathen: "And I will set a sign among them, and I will send them that escape of them into the nations: to Tarshish, Pul and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan: to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, nor seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles" (ISAIAH lxvi, 19). The next verse shows that, prior to the judgment of the living nations by our Lord, Israel will not have been gathered by the Lord into their own land. Whatever brings them in numbers to Jerusalem prior to the Lord's second advent, they return thither in unbelief. The veil is still upon their hearts. But now, after these solemn events, we read these bright and joyous words: "And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations, upon horses, and in chariots, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord. For as the new

heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord" (Isa. lxvii, 20-23)

In this connection observe the respective sentences pronounced: "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Such is the King's judgment on those who rejected His Gospel, and despised, persecuted, or neglected His brethren (Israel). To the righteous our Lord says:—"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." These who had received His grace and witnessed for Him, enter His kingdom and His eternal glory. His final word is thus spoken of the wicked: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into eternal life" (verse 46). Whilst these words of Christ have place, the solemn fact of everlasting punishment is distinctly and unequivocally affirmed by the word and at the judgment of the Great King.

It will probably be asked: What is the relation of these (our Lord's brethren) to the members of the Body of Christ who, prior to this judgment, and at the time of the descent of the Lord into the air, were caught up with the raised dead to meet the Lord in the air? The answer, I believe, is: "The gleanings from the earth during the last days of Antichrist's terrible and fearful persecutions." In my judgment, light is thrown upon this confessedly difficult item in the great series of events by the beloved John, who says in his vision: "And I saw thrones, and

they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them;" then he adds, "I saw the souls of them which were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark in their foreheads, or in their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (REV. xx, 4).

Evidently these are seen subsequently to the enthroned ones; they had remained true at the cost of life. The time is clearly *the time of Antichrist's* great power. And though the word of the Lord is not conclusively stated, I believe that the slain martyrs and the living righteous, who have place at the judgment of the SON OF MAN, will join the Church of the firstborn, and share the Millennial glory.

The third, and final session of judgment, is that of the "Great White Throne." This scene is described, in words of sublime and awful magnificence, in REV. xx, 11-14, and takes place at the end of the Millennial Age. It is therefore certainly a thousand years subsequently to the second session of judgment to which we have referred. The following testimony is conclusive: "The rest of the dead (that is, the wicked and impenitent dead) lived not again till the thousand years were finished" (REV. xx, 5). This Scripture places the judgment of the Great White Throne at the end of the Millennial Age, when the Son delivers up the kingdom to God, and immediately prior to Eternity! the Ages of Ages.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE THREE SESSIONS OF JUDGMENT.

PART III.—THE GREAT WHITE THRONE.

THE MODERN IGNORING OF THE DEVIL.—"And so you decline to believe that there is an evil spirit called 'Your adversary, the devil'?—a powerful being, of whom our Lord speaks in such terms as 'Satan,' 'Serpent,' 'Thief,' 'Liar,' 'Murderer,' 'Deceiver,' 'Destroyer,' etc. A mere mental creation, you say, belonging to the ignorance and superstition of past days; a bugbear to frighten women and children. Ha! ha!" Stay! I am not sure that you are right. To deny or to laugh at that which is true is alike inconclusive, deceptive, and foolish. Our strong objection to your position is this—viz., that if there be no devil the moral integrity of Christ no longer exists, and He stands before the world in the character of a false witness. Are you prepared for this fearful conclusion and outcome of your argument? Further, if we understand your position clearly, all the frightful moral evils that have shocked us all along the line of the history of humanity are results to be attributed purely and altogether to man's thought and action alone. The atrocities of Nero, the cruelties of Robespierre, the horrible criminality of such monsters as Rush, Peace, and Lefroy, all, all had conception, birth, fruit, and result in and from man alone. All iniquity, all evil, a result of the deliberate setting of the will and mind and heart of man in the paths of iniquity. Do we understand you clearly? Is your premiss truthfully and intelligently stated? Then hear the inference and the inevitable conclusion. With the admission of the fact of the devil's existence, man's moral character is indeed mournful and terrible; but if no devil exists either to tempt, incite, or precipitate into action, then is man's moral character in itself, fearful, horrible, and diabolical. The denial of the existence of the devil carries with it the darkest impeachment of the human race that modern thought has dared to utter.—*From "Terse Talk," by* HENRY VARLEY.

Oh! to be ripe, and ready,
For the change so soon at hand;
Oh! to be firm and steady,
When on Jordan's brink I stand.

Oh! to be bold and fearless,
When death bursts on my view;
Oh! to be calm and tearless
When Earth I bid adieu.

Oh! to have no regrettings,
When sinks my life-day's sun,
No sad, remorseful frettings
For work I've left undone.

Oh! to need no confession
Of sin I did not know—
But to see each transgression
And judge it, ere I go.

May Heaven to me open,
When my life's race is run;
And may the first word spoken,
Be—"faithful soul,—well done."

And O! when in I enter,
May the first sight I see,
Be Jesus in the centre
Of myriads saved, like me.

Or, if the Lord's returning
Precludes that I should die,
May my bride's heart be burning,
To meet him in the sky.

A. A. Rees.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE THREE SESSIONS OF JUDGMENT.

Part III.—THE GREAT WHITE THRONE.

IT will not be necessary to enter into any lengthened exposition of the parable of the talents contained in verses 14-30 of this chapter. The object of our Lord is to emphasize the great truth of stewardship in regard to His people during the long season of His absence. They are to rest assured that in every case faithfulness to Him over a few things in this "wicked and sinful age," will not only secure abundance of reward when He shall return in His glory, but that His gracious voice shall be heard saying: "Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

I will only add that the promise of rule and authority

over "many things" again points with great distinctness to the Millennial Age, in which, as kings and priests unto God and our Father, we reign with Christ over the whole earth. This scene is given at the judgment-seat of Christ for His people only, and takes place at the commencement of "the dispensation of the fulness of times" (LUKE xix, 17, 18; REV. v, 9, 10).

The reiterated use of the expressions, "a far country," and "a long time," taken in connection with the scope which these chapters possess, indicates that whatever misapprehension may have possessed the minds of the disciples, our Lord designed these expressions to imply on His part a protracted absence. I confess that I have little disposition to blame the disciples in their evident desire to precipitate the time of our Lord's appearing. Who amongst us does not yearn for His coming and His kingdom? Let it be remembered that several of the apostles were, to no mean extent, eye-witnesses of that glory. It is an undoubted fact that the vision of the glory of that Blessed One to Saul, on his way to Damascus, resulted not only in his conversion, but led him to act so that his whole after life had reference to our Lord's appearing and glory (GAL. vi, 14; 1 THESS. ii, 19).

Here I believe light is thrown upon what is regarded as a great difficulty to many minds. The question is asked: Was not Christ expected in the Apostolic Age? And are not the Epistles to the THESSALONIANS conclusive that the disciples were then actually "waiting for the Lord from heaven"? This is frankly admitted. "Then they were mistaken," it is remarked; "and so may we be."

Now, please, not quite so fast; let us pause a little at this point. Is it not true that our Lord again and again taught the imminency of His coming? (*see* MARK xiii, 32-37). It has been well remarked by Dr. Pierson, of Philadelphia, that "imminency means certainty at some time, possibility at any time." It cannot be questioned that from the Apostolic Age until now the coming of the Lord was *designed* to be the hope of the Church in every generation.

If one thing is clearly revealed in the Scriptures, surely this is, that "to them who look for Him (Christ) He shall appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation" (HEB. ix, 28). This promise belonged to the Church of God in the first century, as really as to the Church in this. Now, whilst it is the merest trifling with Scripture to make the death, or rather the falling asleep of the believer to be the same thing, or the equivalent, in any sense, of our Lord's personal appearing and glory, it is true that the absence from the body which we call death means the presence of the believer at home with the Lord (2 COR. v, 8, R.V.).

It is both unphilosophic and unscriptural to make the personal coming of our Lord anything less than a constant joyous and personal hope—hope, in its true sense of a certain expectation. It argues little for the spiritual sagacity of the Church to have ignored, as she practically has done, the following fact, viz., that those members of the Body of Christ which are now at home with the Lord are partakers in the preparations which are there being made for His coming kingdom and glory.

Certainly, as we have seen, Moses and Elijah have a PRESENT and active share in that glory. Have the millions of the blessed dead none? The Lord, according to His own word, is now preparing the magnificent and incorruptible dwelling for His people. Have the saints who have gone before no place or part in the mighty Worker's purposes and activities? Were the Thessalonian believers mistaken, and was their hope a delusion? Surely not.

These are our Lord's significant words: "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also" (JOHN xiv, 2, 3). Already multitudes of the Church of the Firstborn through death have seen and know the fact of His coming far more perfectly than we, "who still see through a glass, darkly." They, equally with ourselves, anticipate the arrival of that supreme and glorious hour when they, with the Church on earth, shall be together glorified when He appears.

My firm conviction is, that when the Apostle Paul said: "I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better" (PHIL. i, 20, R.V.), the eye of his mind was fixed upon Him whose wonderful glory he had a glimpse of as he was approaching Damascus. That vision of the Lord not only made him as one dead to the vain glory of this world, but it became one of the most powerful incentives to action in his devoted and consecrated life. More than this: it led Paul to long to be with his Lord; and why? To fall *on*

sleep? To enter upon nineteen centuries of quiescent and undisturbed repose? I confess that I have not so read the character of the Apostle of the Gentiles.

I ask my reader's careful consideration of the closing section of the twenty-fifth chapter. At the 31st verse, the parable of the sheep and the goats, commences a scene which I willingly admit is understood by large numbers of thoughtful students of the Scriptures to refer to the final judgment.

I confess that I do not understand this august assize to be identical with the judgment of the great white throne, found in REV. xx, 11-15. I believe that it represents the judgment of the living nations (Christendom) by the SON OF MAN when He comes to the earth at the end or consummation of this age. Of course I do not call in question the suitability of its leading features to illustrate the scene of the final judgment. I know this statement will provoke a good deal of criticism. I shall therefore plainly, and I hope forcibly, state the grounds of my objection to the popular view.

In the first place, the scene in MATTHEW xxv is identified as the judgment of the SON OF MAN, the title which has already proved so full of suggestive thought. The judgment is of the living nations, and takes place on the earth. There is no reference whatever to the resurrection of the dead. Neither death nor the grave are said to give up their dead. The separation of the living is the great and prominent thought AT THIS TIME. And now observe the whole judgment turns upon the question of the treatment of the SON OF MAN, who in a remarkable

way associates Himself with, and identifies Himself in, those whom He calls His brethren. Special and exclusive reference is made either to the help and succour afforded to these, or to the neglect, oppression, and persecution permitted to them.

Now notice what our Lord says, for at this scene of judgment the title of the SON OF MAN gives place to the regal name (*see* verse 34). "The KING said: I was an hungered, and ye fed me; thirsty, and ye gave me drink; sick and in prison, and ye came unto me." Or, on the other hand: "I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not." Now, when the question is asked with apparent surprise: "When saw we Thee an hungered, or naked, or sick, or in prison?" the King adds: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me;" or, on the other hand: "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me" (verses 34-46).

Now, I find it exceedingly difficult to make anything which approaches to a satisfactory comparison, or likeness, between this great assize of the King and the judgment of the great white throne—which evidently takes place just before the commencement of the eternal state, and just before the time when our Lord delivers up the kingdom to the Father (1 COR. xv, 27, 28).

In that final scene of judgment, God is the judge. The dead, small and great, stand before Him. The sea and the grave deliver up the dead which are in them, and

the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books: they were judged every man according to their works. I will not further particularize, but quote, for my reader's careful thought and consideration, the majestic incidents given by the Spirit of God: "And I saw a GREAT WHITE THRONE, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the book, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and then were judged every man according to their works; and death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (REV. xx, 7-15).

These are some of the grounds upon which I call in question the assumed Scriptural warrant for making these two sessions of judgment to be identical. May we not ask: How is it possible to apply the principles of judgment which belong to Matthew xxv, to the heathen world? Untold millions of these have never heard either of the SON OF MAN or His brethren. Indeed, they have never heard the Gospel of Christ. For His rejection it is difficult to see how they can he held responsible. The Apostle well says: "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" (ROM. x, 14). How can it

be affirmed that they have either persecuted or comforted, neglected or clothed, imprisoned or visited, the brethren of our Lord?

Have we not therefore strong ground for believing that the judgment of the living nations, when Christ comes, is not the final judgment? Further, is it not clear that the judgment of the Great White Throne is a judgment according to every man's works, and has a far wider scope than the question of the rejection and persecution of the Lord's brethren?

Further, and of great importance: the Word of God clearly reveals the following facts. In the latest years of this age, Israel, as a people, again comes into very marked prominence. Indeed this is taking place in a remarkable way in the earth now. That they will be in part reconstituted as a nation in their own land before the close of the age, is distinctly made known by the living God (*see* JER. xxx). They will there become a strong bulwark against the atheistic lawlessness which will mark the last days of Gentile power, when Antichrist reigns. Many of them will resolutely refuse, even upon pain of death, to give up their faith in and worship of God. In consequence of their bold and uncompromising opposition, many will suffer terrible persecution at the hands of the Antichrist. Imprisonment, suffering, hunger, nakedness, sorrow, biting poverty, will be known by them in terrible reality. Now mark! when their hour of direst extremity is reached (the time of Jacob's trouble)—the time concerning which our Lord spake: "there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the creation,

no, nor ever shall be" (MATT. xxiv, 21)—then, at that supreme crisis, Israel's rejected King will suddenly appear for their deliverance, and rescue the remnant of them from the awful power and cruel despotism of the Man of Sin.

It is at this time the King dashes in pieces the rule and power of the confederated nations, which are gathered together against Jerusalem under the dominion of the personal Antichrist, who will at that time be recognised as the great presidential head of the Kings of the Earth: The object aimed at by this confederacy being either entirely to subjugate or to destroy Israel, in order to obliterate the name and stamp out all recognition either of the Being, or the worship of the living God. Now, for such a supreme occasion as this, which is revealed in many parts of Scripture, but specially in the book of the prophet ZECHARIAH (xii-xiv), how appropriate is the august grandeur of this judgment of the living nations who are gathered together to do battle against Israel and Jerusalem.

We can thus understand the reason for the prominence which our Lord gives to those persecuted and imprisoned ones whom He calls His brethren, of whom, "concerning the flesh, Christ came" (ROM. ix, 5). His remarkable references to Himself in connection with them are now clear and explicable. He had promised to come in grace again for Israel's deliverance" (MATT. xxiii, 39; ISAIAH lix, 19-21). The absence of the resurrection of the dead is thus accounted for. The awful character of the just judgment of everlasting punishment to these is seen in its proper light—the everlasting punishment of those whom our Lord fittingly describes as goats; the

everlasting blessedness of the sheep to whom He gives Eternal Life: the blessing and the cursing—the eternal judgment and the eternal glory, all is clear.

I venture to think that it will be conceded that there is strong reason for maintaining the position assumed at the outset of our study of these chapters, viz., that the whole testimony is primarily comprehended within the limits of this evil age, and does not refer to events which transpire beyond the commencement of the Millennial Age.

Assuming that the position taken is sound, I need only add that the testimony of God's word, which deals with the great events which are shewn to be subsequent to the Millennial Age, are equally clear, though very briefly summarized. We read: "And when the thousand years are expired" (the end of the Millennial Age) "Satan shall be loosed out of his prison" (REV. xx, 7). At the commencement of the thousand years, he was laid hold on by a mighty angel from heaven and bound, and cast into the bottomless pit, shut up, and at the close of the Millennial Age loosed, for a little season. "And he shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went upon the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (verses 8-10).

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE RESURRECTION.—THREEFOLD.

"Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them" PSALM lxviii, 18).

"Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead" (ISAIAH xxvi, 19).

"Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many" (MATT. xxvii, 50-53).

"Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men" (EPHES. iv, 8).

"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him" (I COR. xv, 21-27).

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (REV. xx, 6).

Sing, O heavens ! O earth rejoice !
Angel harp, and human voice,
Round Him, as He rises, raise
Your ascending Saviour's praise.
Alleluia !

Bruisèd is the serpent's head,
Hell is vanquished, death is dead,
And to Christ, gone up on high,
Captive is Captivity.
Alleluia !

All His work and warfare done
He into His heaven is gone,
And beside His Father's throne,
Now is pleading for His own :
Alleluia !

Asking gifts for sinful men,
That He may come down again,
And, the fallen to restore,
In them dwell for evermore.
Alleluia !

Sing, O heavens ! O earth rejoice !
Angel harp, and human voice,
Round Him, in His glory, raise
Your ascended Saviour's praise.
Alleluia !

MONSELL.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE RESURRECTION: THREEFOLD.

WE now direct attention to the kindred topic of the resurrection. In dealing with this important theme, let it be borne in mind that we are writing concerning the resurrection of the body, and not in reference to participation in that spiritual life which results from the exercise of faith in Christ as the quickening spirit. The distinction which we indicate is necessary to point out, and is clearly defined by our Lord in the Gospel of John. We read: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself" (ch. v, 25, 26). Evidently this refers to the spiritual life which our Lord brought into the world, and of which He is the author, source, and giver. Hence His striking words: "I am come that ye might have life;"

and again: "He that hath the Son, hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life" (1 JOHN v, 12).

But now observe: our Lord, dealing with the evident surprise occasioned by His words, thus speaks: "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation" (verses 28, 29). Clearly this refers to the resurrection of the body, and distinctly shows not only that man is naturally immortal, but that every man's future coming forth for judgment is secured by the authority and power of the Son of God. Should any escape judgment, His faithfulness and truth would fail. What a rebuke is thus administered to those who teach that man is not immortal, and on what a sure AND CERTAIN ground the fact of future retributive judgment rests.

Before proceeding, we carefully distinguish the body from *the man*—the immortal personality, which dwells in the body. Our Lord brings this distinction out clearly in His direct testimony concerning the rich man and Lazarus. I say direct testimony, because some endeavour to weaken the force of our Lord's words by calling His teaching "a parable." The plain statement concerning the rich man and Lazarus is not a parable; BUT IF IT WERE so, the facts for which parabolic language stands are real and precise. There are those who have the temerity to affirm that our Lord uses the language of hyberbole. Do these understand that this Greek term means an exaggeration? The Lord, speaking of the personality of Dives,

says : "The rich man also died, and was buried (the body, observe, buried), and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom" (LUKE xvi, 24).

There is no death, or sleep, or rest to the spirit. There can be no question that instantly the ungodly personality, the unholy spirit of the man, passes from the body, he enters the place of suffering appointed for the wicked dead. In that condition he remains until, at the command of our Lord, the dishonoured body is called forth from the grave. Then the ungodly spirit re-enters its former dwelling. Thus, associated and tried at the FINAL JUDGMENT, the body and spirit alike are unitedly cast into the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone (REV. xxi, 8).

For purposes of clear distinction, we observe that the Scriptures make known three resurrections. One is already past, which comprehended the Lord and "many bodies of the saints which slept" (MATT. xxvii, 52, 53). The first future resurrection will comprehend the whole of those believers whose bodies have been buried, not previously raised from the dead, from the days of Abel until our Lord appears in the air (1 COR. xv, 23; 1 THESS. iv, 16). It will also include those whom John speaks of as the martyred host slain during the power and reign of the Antichrist (REV. xx, 4-6; DAN. xii, 2; REV. vii, 9-17). This resurrection of the martyred company is in point of time subsequent to the rapture of the Church. The reason why John calls the resurrection of the martyrs "*the first resurrection*" is that he is writing

chronologically of events which are subsequent to our Lord's descent into the air. His comparison in the use of the word "first" is between the resurrection of the slaughtered martyrs, and the rest of the dead which live not again until the thousand years are finished (REV. xx, 4-6). The second future resurrection is the final one (*see* JOHN v, 28, 29; REV. xx, 5-12).

Let us carefully notice that the beloved John says: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." These words apply in principle to ALL who have part in the first resurrection. The cursed and the unholy will have no part or lot in the glorious scenes identified with the Millennial Age. The first resurrection covers a period of time which I do not understand to be clearly defined in the Scriptures. This, however, is revealed; it will comprehend all who reign with Christ throughout the Millennial Age. It embraces (1) the firstfruits (REV. xiv, 4); (2) the harvest (verses 14-17); (3) the saints martyred during the reign of Antichrist (REV. xx, 4-6); and all those also, who during the great tribulation believe the Gospel and die in the faith of Christ. This first future resurrection embraces in my judgment all among the firstfruits before the throne, such as Moses, whose bodies so far as we know are yet in the grave. Remember that we are here dealing with the resurrection of the body.

It is important to distinguish clearly between the resurrection from the dead, and the rapture from among the living. If I understand the teaching of the Word of God rightly, the first resurrection embraces the coming together

at different times of at least three companies, which are distinctly and separately referred to" (*see* REV. xiv, 4, 14-16; xx, 4).

There are, as we have seen, several raptures spoken of in the book of REVELATION. There is an interesting analogy to this found in the processes of the natural harvest. This also comprehends; first, the firstfruits; second, the bulk or harvest of the earth; and third, the gleanings. So also the fruits of the earth. They are not all ripened the same day. The husbandman gathereth that which is meet and ready, and not the unripe and unfitted. I venture to suggest that herein is the true exegesis of all those passages which exhort to preparedness for the coming glory. It is not a question of the Lord leaving His loved ones behind for judgment, but His desire for and discernment of their readiness for His appearing. "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready" (REV. xix, 7). We cannot too strongly or constantly press upon one another the solemn and tender teaching of our Lord, given to the Church at Philadelphia: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (REV. iii, 10). A subtle spiritual paralysis, evidently from the devil, is acting like a cursed opiate in these dangerous days. It is no use disguising the fact that it is hard work resolutely to keep the word of our Lord's patience. Well does He remind us: "Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (REV. iii, 11).

In confirmation of the views here expressed, we turn

to 1 Cor. xv, where the great truth of the resurrection of the body is taught, enforced, and elaborated. We read: "Now if Christ is preached, that he hath been raised from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith also is vain: ye are yet in your sins. "Then they, also, which have fallen asleep in Christ, are perished" (verses 12-19). "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."

Thus fearlessly does the Apostle deal with the fundamental doctrine of the resurrection. I say fundamental, because upon the great fact of the personal resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ the present and future salvation of the whole Church of Christ is made to rest. It is the contrast between every believer having perished, and being made a partaker of eternal glory through faith in Him whose resurrection is the proof and pledge, not of our justification only, but of our resurrection also (Rom. iv, 25). Therefore it is written: "Christ the firstfruits" (verse 23); or again: "the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all he might have the pre-eminence" (Col. i,18); or as John, looking forward to His coming supremacy, says, in glowing language: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten from the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth" (Rev. i, 5). This resurrection, then—the raising from the dead of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ—is already past.

It is worthy of notice that Isaiah, prophesying of the

resurrection which had its incipient fulfilment at the time of the resurrection of the Lord, thus speaks : "Thy dead men shall live ; together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake ! and sing, ye that dwell in dust ; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead" (Isa. xxvi, 19). It will be remembered that in Matthew (chap. xxvii, 52, 53) we read : "And the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves, after his resurrection, and went unto the holy city, and appeared unto many." Thus we have that which the type, the sheaf of firstfruits, suggests.

Beyond this we have the prophet David's testimony concerning our Lord's resurrection and ascension fulfilled. "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive" (Psalm lxviii, 18). So also the Apostle : "When he ascended up on high he led captivity captive (literally a multitude of captives), and gave gifts unto men" (Ephes. iv. 8). Thus did our Lord in resurrection shew forth the resurrection of His people, and gloriously make known how He had spoiled the "principalities and powers, making a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in himself" (Col. ii, 15).

We now consider the meaning of the latter part of the passage : "Christ the firstfruits ; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming." This statement distinctly proves the time and limit of the first future resurrection. That this resurrection is to be carefully distinguished from the resurrection of the martyrs, and from what is commonly called the final resurrection, the following testimonies

conclusively prove. The Apostle writes: "They that are Christ's at his coming." Here is the limit: "They that are Christ's." Those who are not His, will not be raised from the dead when He appears.

This accords with the words of the prophet Isaiah: "*Thy* dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake! and sing! ye that dwell in dust." At the resurrection of our Lord many bodies of the saints arose, none who were sinners. The unjust could not awake to sing. Their awaking is to terror and judgment, "to weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth." Turning to the memorable words in 1 THESS. iv, 16, we have incidentally the same distinction: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first." So also in 1 COR. xv, 51, where the Apostle says: "Behold I shew you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

Here the limit is again clearly defined. The sleeping saints are raised, the living saints also instantly changed, but there is no allusion to the resurrection of the wicked dead. So also in COL. iii, 3, 4: "Ye have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ our life shall appear, *then* shall ye also appear with him in glory."

We now direct attention to the resurrection of the martyrs, slain during the power of the Antichrist. In REV. xx, 4, which evidently gives a scene subsequent to

the binding and shutting up of Satan, and the casting of the beast and the false prophet into a lake of fire (ch. xix, 20), the Apostle writes: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them." Evidently this gives the translated Church enthroned with Christ. John sees the heirs of God and the joint-heirs with Christ on thrones in the heaven in glory. Then follow these words: "And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark in their foreheads, or in their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

Clearly we have here distinct reference to the time during which the Antichrist reigns in awful power. The days of which it is written: "And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws (DAN. vii, 25), and shall deny the Father, and the Son." Of the Antichrist, at this time, it is written: "And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven; and it was given to him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations." In league with the dragon (the devil), from whom he receives power, the Antichrist sets up his own image for worship, and those who refuse to worship are killed. The small and great, rich and poor, bond and free, are made to receive his mark, either in their right hand or in their foreheads" (REV. xiii).

It will be observed that those only are referred to who have come within the range of Antichrist's persecuting power. It is the martyred host, as also all believers, who died during the time of the great tribulation. These are they to whom Daniel refers in chapter xii, 1: "And at that time shall Michael the archangel stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people, and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be written in the book." The whole context, as well as the words quoted, shew that Daniel is referring to the same Satanic and antichristian power. The testimony further determines that this dreadful persecution involves the violent death of multitudes which belong to the Jewish people. It is the time of Jacob's trouble (JER. xxx, 3-9), the dark and fearful season of which our Lord said: "There shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world, to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (MATT. xxiv, 21).

So awful will be the character of that time, that it is added: "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened" (verse 22). This passage evidently refers to the same time and scenes. So also John, in REV. vii, which gives the sealing on the earth of the hundred and forty-four thousand of Israel's tribes, says, in verse 9: "After this, I beheld, and lo a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and

before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." When the question was asked: "What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?" the answer is thus given: "These are they which came out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the lamb."

In the comparatively quiet days in which, through the mercy of God, our lot is cast, we seem scarcely able to realize the fearful character of the coming great tribulation. But these days of unparalleled tribulation shall surely overtake the world.

We therefore understand the words of the Apostle which refer to the resurrection of the martyred saints, and described as the "blessed and holy" who *have part* in the first resurrection, to comprehend all, both Jew and Gentile, who become the Lord's during the period which elapses between the removal of the Church by the Lord when He descends into the air, and the coming again of the Church with Him in power and great glory to the judgment of the living nations (*see* 1 THESS. iii, 13). Vast numbers of these will have been beheaded. This method of destroying life recalls the horrors of the French Revolution, which was in itself an incipient picture of the frightful sacrifice of life which will take place when the revived persecuting power of the Papacy shall be compelled to give place to the still more horrible power of the devil and Antichrist combined. The 17th chapter of the REVELATION proves beyond all question that this will be so.

It is a remarkable fact, as shewing what the drift is, and how rapidly we are approaching the time of the end, that, during the past three months, two principal cities in France—Paris and Lyons—have forbidden in their public schools and courts of justice the use of the Divine Name. This has been done to purge out what is blasphemously called "an effete and exhausted superstition." That France will play a prominent part in the final atheism of the antichristian era, there is no room to doubt.

The taking away of the Church immediately before the manifestation of the persecuting power of the Antichrist, I believe to be clearly revealed. I do not understand that any of the then existing members of the Body of Christ will be left behind when our Lord descends into the air, I understand the taking away of the Church to be, to the world, one of its earliest judgments. The world will not recognise this in the least; nevertheless, the fact remains that from that point the salt of the earth and the light of the world is gone

The world which rejected the Lord's Christ, and despises His Church, will doubtless affect gladness when the first tremendous surprise concerning the departure of the Church is over. The world has never either understood or recognised the intrinsic value of the Church of God as a restraining force. The Church of Christ is, and has been, the salt of the earth, and the light of the world. Not in vain did our Lord say to His disciples: "Ye are the salt of the earth: ye are the light of the world" (MATT. v, 13, 14). What is one of the great purposes for the use of salt? To prevent dead

matter passing into the stages of corruption and putrefaction. What the purpose of light? To break in upon, to discover, and reprove the darkness. These reproving, conserving, and preventing qualities have had, and still possess a marvellously restraining influence upon the evil which is common to the world. When the salt of the earth and the light of the world is taken away, as it will be, when the Church of Christ is taken away, what a fearful impetus will accrue to the power and energy of evil. The corrupt and ungodly world will revel in darkness, and will possess a free platform on which to work out, with Satanic and atheistic celerity, the abounding wickedness which characterises the last days. The time during which the Antichrist exercises his fearful power, the Word of God shews, is limited to three and a half years. That there should be no mistake made, we have it stated in a threefold form, viz. : "forty-two months," "three and a half years," and "twelve hundred and sixty days." Our Lord's words concerning this dreadful crisis in human experience are that for "the elect's sake these days (the three and a half years) shall be shortened." By how much, we know not. This also is among the things which are in the Father's power (Acts i, 6).

The awful cry of those "that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held : How long O Lord, holy, and true, dost not thou avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" is answered thus: "that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants and their brethren that should be killed as they were should be fulfilled" (Rev. vi, 9-11).

No time, we may rest assured, will be lost. When the little season has reached its limit, then "the souls which were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and the Word of God (Jew and Gentile martyrs, God's spiritual Israel gathered during the last days), and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands," these also are added to the enthroned ones, and they also live and reign with Christ a thousand years.

I need not at this time enlarge concerning the final resurrection. In the preceding chapter, and in connection with the final judgment, I have already done this. I will only add that then the whole of the wicked dead, prior to the Millennial Age, will hear our Lord's summoning voice, and will come forth to the resurrection of damnation (JOHN v, 29, 30); and that all the sinners, also, who have died during the Millennial Age, right up to the final end, will then come forth and stand for eternal judgment (REV. XX, 11, 12).

CHAPTER XXX.

THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH.

"And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God" (REV. xiv, 1-5).

"THE MORNING COMETH."

"My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning."—Ps. cxxx, 6.

PART I.

The hush of night still lingers,
The stars are in the sky,
Darkly the mountain summits
Lift up their heads on high;
And yet the hope of morning
Beats strong within the breast,
While scanning the horizon
From distant east to west.

The valleys lie in shadow,
Almost invisible;
The cattle still are sleeping
Upon the grassy hill.
Deep down the lakes are lying
In dark sublimity;
You rather *feel* their presence,
Than scan their purity!

But lo! a touch of silver
Tells of the waning night;
The moon withdraws her shining,
The stars grow pale and white.
In breathless expectation
We wait the dawning day,
When night gives place to sunshine,
And shadows flee away!

Quickly the silver changes,
And hues of crimson dye,
With clouds of golden beauty,
Now gem the Eastern sky;
The snow-capped distant mountains
Have caught the morning glow,
Though darkness holds his empire
Over the vales below!

CHAPTER XXX.

THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH.

AT the outset I desire to say that I feel considerable difficulty in discussing this phase of my subject. I should willingly have passed it by, but in presenting a volume which is designed to give something like a clear, if not a comprehensive view of Christ's coming kingdom, I have not felt at liberty to do so. The views expressed are written suggestively and not dogmatically. My design is to stimulate study and enquiry concerning a confessedly difficult theme. A subject which has caused such variety of thought and discussion bespeaks necessity for forbearance. This I ask. There is sometimes a human positiveness which I think is to be greatly deprecated. Some prophetic writers clinch an argument by their own strength of assertion. This is neither wise nor reverent; subjects not clearly revealed we may well speak of with modesty. Certainly I desire to hold closely to the Word of God in all things, and have not knowingly traversed these lines. There has been great

diversity of thought and utterance on this important topic. I will not attempt more than a clear statement of the opinions which are maintained, and then give what I believe the Scriptures teach on this subject.

There are three principal views held concerning the Rapture of the Church. One is that at the final end, to use a term which is common to those who deny the Lord's pre-Millennial advent, all the bodies of the saints (the dead), and the whole of the living then on the earth, will be instantly raised, changed, and caught up together to meet the Lord in the air.

Another view, maintained by many who hold the personal and pre-Millennial advent of our Lord, is that those saints only who look for His appearing (*i.e.*, the watching and consecrated among His people) will be translated at that time. This is regarded as the rapture of the firstfruits (REV. xiv, 1-4). According to this view, the unwatchful and worldly-minded among believers will be left to pass through the great tribulation identified with the Antichrist.

Those who hold this view quote the parable of the ten virgins as sustaining their belief. They regard the foolish virgins as true believers, but careless, and not awaiting their Lord's return. For this they are left outside, when the door closes upon the wise virgins, who go in with the bridegroom to the marriage (MATT. xv, 10). They hold, however, that the foolish virgins will, after passing through the great tribulation, ultimately be received. In like manner they understand the words of our Lord: "One shall be taken and the other left" (LUKE xvii, 34), to

refer to the taking away of the prepared, when the rapture of firstfruits takes place, whilst those who are left will pass through the great tribulation, and share the translation when the dead in Christ are raised, and all the living saints on the earth changed at the time of our Lord's descent into the air (1 THESS. iv, 16, 17; 1 COR. xv, 51-53).

A third view held is that all believers will be taken, but that the rapture will be secret and altogether unknown at the time by the world; that our Lord will come as the thief, and suddenly take away from the earth all His people—His treasure. The words of our Lord are very remarkable: "If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I come upon thee" (REV. iii, 3). To similar effect also *see* REV. xvi, 15. It should be added that others maintain that there have been and will be several raptures. That as the summer and harvest season does not see all the fruit ripen at once, or the husbandman gather all the same day, and without respect to fruition and readiness, so also in the season identified with our Lord's second coming (REV. iv, 1-2; xiii, 6; xiv, 1-4; 1 THESS, iv, 17).

No doubt there is something to be said in defence of all these views. I confess to great sympathy with anything which acts as a powerful incentive to real consecration of life. I am not surprised that the searching words of Christ: "Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" —(LUKE xxi, 36)—should be read in the light of solemn

warning and possibility of being left behind when the Bridegroom comes. I would the more carefully accentuate this, because, as a question of interpretation, I am about to shew that the Scriptures clearly teach that none who are truly members of the Lord's Body will be left when the rapture of the dead and living saints takes place.

In maintaining this position I adduce the following arguments, which I present in the form of a series of questions. First: If the worldly and unwatchful living saints are left on the earth, should not the sleeping ones also, who have been worldly and unwatchful prior to their death, be left behind in their graves? If all the dead are raised without reference to the personal devotedness of any, as compared with the rest, is it not strong presumptive evidence that the same principle will be observed in regard to the whole of the living saints? If all the sleeping saints are raised and caught up to meet the Lord, upon what sound canon of interpretation can it be affirmed that the unwatchful living ones are to be left behind?

Beside this, large numbers of the most devoted members of the body of Christ have never known, neither have they been instructed in, the great truths of the Lord's Second Coming. Is their faithfulness in other respects to be passed by, and, because they have not looked for the Lord's appearing, are they, when He comes, to be left to pass through the great tribulation. This objection applies both to the living and the sleeping saints. If the line is to be drawn at this point is it straight?

Further: Is it in harmony with our Lord's teaching to exalt this act of obedience above all others?—and this view, in my judgment, certainly does so.

Will it be asserted that in practical experience all those who hold the Lord's Second Coming are pre-eminent for personal holiness and sanctity of life? It should be so, I know; but is it the fact? Again, as we have clearly seen: "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive for the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 COR. v, 10). Neglect of watching in regard to many things, of which the Lord's coming is one, will then be dealt with, and consequent loss of reward certainly entailed (1 COR. iii, 12-15).

It cannot be too strongly insisted upon that the view that the unwatchful believers will be left to pass through the great tribulation, confronts us with two future judgments for certain members of the Lord's mystic body. The first, being left behind when our Lord comes. The second, loss of reward at the judgment-seat of Christ. Concerning that body it is written: "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word; that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (EPHES. v, 25, 27).

In view of these striking and tender words I confess that this theory bewilders me. Has our Lord no bowels of mercy? As the merciful and faithful High Priest in the things which pertain to God, has He no function for

His people? Is it not specially written concerning believers that He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him? (HEB. vii, 25). Is there no cleansing efficacy in His precious blood for the sin of unwatchfulness? I confess that I have not so learned Christ.

Besides this, during the interval which elapses between the rapture of the prepared believers, and the second rapture suggested as taking place at the close of the great tribulation, the judgment-seat of Christ has had place; and, "the marriage supper of the lamb had come, and His wife had made herself ready" (REV. xix, 6-9). In my judgment, this theory of a part of the redeemed body of Christ being left behind, after our Lord descends into the air, has no foundation in the Word of God. Unconsciously to themselves, perhaps, those who held this view have in this respect fallen from the Spirit of Grace.

I see nothing in the Scriptures to warrant such a conclusion, and I venture to affirm that the thought has arisen through confounding the rapture of the residue of the firstfruits with the rapture of the Church. The time of the former rapture does not appear to be fixed, but certainly it takes place before the rapture of the Church (the harvest—the bulk), which transpires when our Lord descends into the air, raises the dead in Christ, and instantly changes all the living (1 THESS. iv, 16, 17). The word of the Apostle on this point is conclusive. Speaking of the actual time when our Lord shall descend into the air, and evidently of the whole of the saints on earth at that crisis, Paul writes: "We shall not ALL sleep,

but we shall ALL be changed," and that there can be no mistake as to the time, he adds: "in a MOMENT, in the TWINKLING of an eye, at the LAST TRUMP; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 COR. xv, 51, 52). The expressions, "*we*," "*all*," "*moment*," "*twinkling of an eye*," and "*last trump*, distinctly shew the whole Church of Christ on earth, at that hour living or dead, to be received by the Lord.

This theory of the unwatchful saints being left cannot be entertained if we clearly understand that Christ is our life. The teaching of the Word of God to the whole body of believers on this great question is very clear and very blessed. The sinner cannot be accepted by God until death to sin and quickening with Christ has taken place. Death unto sin is not a question arising out of personal experience. It is emphatically a question of the exercise of faith in the grand realities of the Gospel of Christ. What are these? Let us carefully notice the divine teaching at this point. It is the blessed God Who instructs. This is what He says to every member of the company of believers who are in Christ and are living a life of faith upon the Son of God: "Ye have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (COL. iii, 3, 4; 1 JOHN. iii, 1, 2).

True Christian experience speaks thus: "I have been crucified with Christ, yet I live, and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live in the faith, the faith which is in the Son of

God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me" (GAL. ii, 20, R.V.). Faith's possessions are all centred in Christ, and so far as righteousness and true holiness are concerned, they are pre-eminently prospective possessions. Well is it written: "For we, through the spirit by faith, wait for the hope of righteousness" (chapter v, 5, R.V.).

Where is the believer who has the slightest justification for professing himself righteous on personal grounds? A righteous sinner is a contradiction in terms? I am not forgetting that "the fine linen (external dress) is the righteousness of saints" (REV. xix, 8). The believer, having accepted the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, awaits the appearing of Him who is his righteousness and life. Nothing could be more clearly stated; but how little is the truth of God in this respect understood. The Word says: "In that He (Christ) died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye, also, yourselves to have died indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus" (ROM. vi, 10, 11, R.V.).

Who can read these precious words, and carefully ponder their meaning, without seeing the confusion of the thought, that when the life of the believer, now hidden with Christ in God, appears, instead of being manifested in glory, he may be left to pass through the great tribulation. Is he in this way to overcome, as best he can, the energies of evil propensity on account of which God long since adjudged him worthy of death—nay, more—from which evil condition the blessed God, through the redemption and resurrection of Christ, completely and for

ever delivered him? Verily, this theory of some of the members of the body of Christ being left to pass through the great tribulation because of failure to watch for our Lord's appearing, is utter confusion. It bespeaks the want of discernment between the flesh and the spirit; the law and the gospel; the failure of man, and the exceeding riches of the grace of God.

As an illustration of the unwisdom which this view involves: The foolish virgins, who evidently stand in the position of mere professors, are spoken of as real believers, and are regarded as typical of those members of the body of Christ which are left to pass through the great tribulation. We carefully observe that the lamps of the foolish virgins are spoken of as "going out" at the very time when He who is the life and light of each believer comes. (MATT. xxv, 1-10; COL. iii, 2, 3).

In this parable clearly we have real possession and mere profession—power, as distinguished from form—spiritual life, as contrasted with fair earthly moralism. The distinction is between oil and no oil, grace and destitution of grace. It is light manifested in His own when the life comes. It is darkness and shutting out of those concerning whom our Lord uses these awful words: "Verily, I say unto you, *I know you not.*" Who can fail to connect their "Lord! Lord! open to us!" with the ready "Lord! Lord!" of those false servants to whom in that great day He will reply, "*I never knew you!*" (MATT. vii, 22, 23). The words: "I know you not!" in my judgment, are conclusive. It would be impossible for the Lord of truth to affirm this concerning any of the members of His Body.

Beside this, may we not ask: Has the Lord no pity or compassion for the weak among His people? Have we no care for the weak members of our bodies? Do we leave them exposed to the blast of the tempest in order to their healing? Will the mother shut the door in the face of her own careless and thoughtless child in order that she may learn wisdom in the streets during the dark night, which brings forth its crowd of transgressors? Did the Lord shut out from the Passover supper the sleepers who, because of the weakness of the flesh, could not watch with Him one hour? Did He withhold the bread and wine from the hand of Peter who, so shortly afterwards, fell beneath the subtle power of the devil, acting upon that moral cowardice which is ever the twin brother of self-confidence?

If the view which I am controverting were true, surely we might read, not of the grace, but of the judgment which is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1 PET. i, 13).

At the risk of repeating that which has been already affirmed, I remark that the questions either of reward or loss, bound up with the fact of our responsibility to Christ as the sons of God, are to be settled at the judgment seat of Christ alone (1 COR. iii, 13-15; 2 COR. v, 10). (*see* Chapter XXVI).

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE TRANSLATION OF THE FIRST-FRUITS.

"And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb" (REV. xiv, 1-4).

"THE MORNING COMETH."

PART II.

Now suddenly the sunlight
  Chases the gloom away ;
Ten thousand rays of morning
  Proclaim the risen day.
Rocks, woods, and rushing rivers,
  Lift up a mighty voice,
While lakes with twinkling wavelets
  Echo the word—Rejoice !

* * * * * *

We wait, O blessed Jesus,
  For yet a brighter hour,
Though clouds of sorrow linger,
  And Satan wield n is power.
Hope anchors on the promise ;
  God's word can never fail ;
The Truth shall surely triumph,
  The Light shall yet prevail !

Night *must* give place to morning ;
  The Sun of suns shall rise,
And flood this world with radiance,
  Too pure for sinful eyes.
And when the Royal Bridegroom
  Comes forth to claim His Bride,
And on the clouds of heaven
  In majesty doth ride,
Then shall Thy waiting children
  Adore earth's rightful King.
Angels shall swell the anthem,
  While woods and mountains sing.

Return, in all Thy beauty,
  Messiah ! Lord of Life !
Begin Thy reign of glory,
  And end this mortal strife !

CHAPTER XXXI

THE TRANSLATION OF THE FIRST-FRUITS.

BEARING in mind that we desire to know the truth concerning the rapture of the Firstfruits so clearly stated in Rev. xiv, 1-4, I first direct attention to that passage: "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before THE THRONE, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb withersoever he goeth. These

were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb."

Now I know that the one hundred and forty and four thousand are regarded by some as strictly Jewish, and the testimony in chapter vii, verses 1-8, gives considerable force to the position held. Certainly the Mount Zion alluded to favours the thought, but the rest of the passage is entirely a scene fixed in heaven, "the throne," "the song," "the harpers," "the living creatures," "the redeemed," or as the Revised Version puts it, "the purchased out of earth." The testimony in this passage does not in my judgment sustain the view that it is the same as REV. vii, 1-8, or that it is Jewish, though doubtless many of Israel's sons will be found among the company of the raptured firstfruits. We cannot fail to notice the marked suggestion of completeness indicated by the number—one hundred and forty-four thousand; as also the distinction between the rapture of the harvest, which, as we have seen, comprehends all believers, whether living or dead, not included in the company of the firstfruits (carefully compare REV. xiv, 4, with verses 14-16).

I see no reason why the "firstfruits unto God and the Lamb" should not include all those who, from Abel downwards, have been accounted "worthy to stand before the Son of Man." Many of these comprehend those who have died as the generation of the godly had place in the past centuries. Observe! these are spoken of as the firstfruits unto *God* and the *Lamb*. Others may have been raptured as Enoch and Elijah were, but of whose translation the Word of God gives no

record. The Scriptures do not profess to give details in regard to individual history beyond that which is necessary to the purpose and work of God. It will be seen that this view reaches on to and comprehends the rapture of the residue of the firstfruits which is yet future. The fact which we have to deal with is the presence of the complete company of "the firstfruits" before the throne before the SON OF MAN appears and thrusts in His sickle and reaps the harvest of the earth. Clearly the reaping by the Lord, in verses 14-17, is of His people. The vintage of the earth where wrath and judgment are seen in all their awfulness is given in verses 17-19. This view embraces the whole of past history. How did the august company of "the firstfruits" come there unless taken from the earth before the harvest? This chapter is clearly chronological in its statements.

We are certain that the moment the spirit of the believer leaves the body he is present with the Lord (2 COR. v, 6). May there not be a spiritual body prepared and ready for the freed spirit. What does Paul mean when he writes "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven (2 COR. v, 2). Moses was not raptured so far as the instant change and taking up of his mortal body was concerned, for was he not buried? and yet we have seen him on the mount of transfiguration appearing in and possessed of the body of glory. Paul, at the time he was stoned and left for

dead, was raptured ("caught up") to paradise. This was not the rapture of the earthly tabernacle, but of the "man in Christ" (2 COR. xii, 4).

If this view be correct does it not give additional emphasis to the words of the Apostle where he says: "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from (among) the dead"? May not this high position among the firstfruits prove to be the mark of the prize of the calling of God in Christ Jesus toward which he pressed, but which he did not account himself as having yet attained? (PHIL. iii, 12-14). In connection with his rapture to paradise, it is remarkable to observe that Paul writes: "I knew a man in Christ, above fourteen years ago (whether in the body I cannot tell, or out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth), such a one caught up to the third heaven" (2 COR. xii, 2-4).

We observe that the letter to the Corinthians, in which these words occur, bears date in the year 60, A.D. Now turning to the scene where Paul was stoned and left for dead, we find the date is the year 45, A.D. This, to say the least, is exceedingly interesting. This surely is more than a coincidence? The "man in Christ" whom Paul knew, above fourteen years ago, raptured to paradise, was, without question, none other than Paul himself. He was taken up (raptured) by the Lord at the time of the stoning at Antioch. Carefully note the interesting narrative. We read: "And having stoned Paul, they drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead. Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up and came into the city; and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe"

(Acts xiv, 19, 20). I shall, perhaps, be counted a mystic for adding that I believe that whilst the stoning was going on, the Lord caught up Paul to paradise, and refreshed him there. I believe it firmly.

If the view here finding expression be correct, it simplifies the question of the rapture of the firstfruits and leaves intact the harvest rapture, which certainly comprehends all who are alive and remain when our Lord raises the dead and changes in a moment all the living saints.

I bear strong but respectful testimony against views which, in my judgment, destroy the unity of the Body of Christ. I do not believe in excluding the Old Testament saints from part and place in that mystic body. The views I am here advancing do not in the slightest degree impair or touch that unity. They simply involve precedence in time and position to certain numbers of that Body as a reward for faithful service to their Lord.

I know that it has been affirmed that this "mystery" had no place until revealed to the Apostle. Is that statement sound? Paul says that this mystery of the Body was "*hid* in God," but manifested to him by God. Exactly. That which was hidden was manifested. You cannot hide that which does not exist. To answer: God's purpose is here in question, will not suffice. Surely that which was hidden had being.

I regard the Old Testament saints as living stones, long since quickened, fashioned, and prepared. Material all ready fitted in place, being builded together with us for an habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. ii).

Finally, no careful reader of the book of REVELATION can fail to see that there are several distinct raptures. This I have indicated in the passages named, a careful study of which will well repay the student of the Word (REV. iv, 1, 2; vii, 9, 17; xi, 12; xii, 5; xiv, 1, 4). The bodies of the saints who arose after our Lord's resurrection were not seen by the disciples to ascend to heaven as they saw the Lord go up from Olivet, but is it not written, "He ascended up on high and led captivity captive"? (a multitude of captives); *see* also PSALM lxviii, 18. Granting that the grand fulfilment of this scene is yet future, is there not room to recognise the *firstfruit* fulfilment in the resurrection of the many saints whose bodies rose after our Lord's resurrection from the dead? (MATT. xxvii, 51, 53).

We need to be careful that we do not confound rapture with resurrection. I believe that great misunderstanding and confusion has arisen at this point. The raptures with which we are familiar comprehend Enoch, Elijah, and the Lord Jesus Christ. To these may be added those of whom Paul speaks in EPHES. iv, 8—those who rose from the dead after our Lord's resurrection: "He led a multitude of captives on high." The rapture of Paul himself (caught up to paradise, where he heard words impossible to utter) (2 COR. xii, 2-4). The beloved John, also, was caught away, in order to the visions of the Apocalypse.

In REV. iv, 1, we read: "After this I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard, *a voice* as of a trumpet speaking with me,

one saying, *Come up hither*, and I will shew thee things which must come to pass hereafter. Straightway I was in the Spirit: and behold, there was a throne set in heaven." Clearly the Apostle was taken to heaven. Neither must we omit the experience of which the Evangelist Philip was the subject. We read: "The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip." This supernatural translation was not, however, to paradise, but to Azotus, where in all the cities he preached Christ until he came to Cæsarea (ACTS viii, 39, 40). These experiences accentuate the view here expressed, and aid in comprehending the rise, progress, and fulness of the *firstfruits*, the various accessions which, dating from the long past of Church history, run on unto the completion of the august company before the THRONE.

I now ask my reader's careful attention to the future rapture of those members of the body of Christ which, with my present light I believe, will make up the complement of the company of the firstfruits. Of course I do not pretend to say when this rapture of the residue of the firstfruits will take place. It will, according to the views here expressed, be before the Lord raises the dead and changes the living saints. The interval, however, between the two events cannot be long. It is an early stage in the series of events which close this evil age. This rapture from earth I regard as the predicted SIGN of the SON OF MAN (MATT. xxiv, 30). Around the expression: "The SIGN of the Son of Man," great interest gathers. The words of our Lord are: "Then shall appear the SIGN of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes

of the earth mourn, and they shall see the SON OF MAN coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (MATT. xxiv, 30).

It is worthy of notice that when the Jews demanded of Christ a sign, saying: "What SIGN showest Thou, then, that we may see and believe Thee—what dost Thou work?"—(JOHN vi, 30)—our Lord replied, describing Himself as the true bread which came down from heaven, adding: "he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever" (verse 58). They replied, saying: "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" Jesus answered: "Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the SON OF MAN ASCEND up where He was before?" (verses 61-63).

I ask may it not be that our Lord designed His ascension to be the SIGN for which they in an unbelieving spirit made request? We remember the SIGN asked for in MATT. xii, 39, and we recall the fact that the Lord was pleased to speak of the sign of the prophet Jonas as having reference to His burial. We recall the enquiry of the disciples: "What shall be the SIGN of thy coming?" (MATT. xxiv, 3). Is not the parable of the virgins—with its emphatic, "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins"—the answer given by the Lord, as the SIGN of His coming? His coming as the bridegroom must not be lost sight of.

Now, I do not speak dogmatically, but it comes forcibly to mind that the going in of the five wise virgins with the bridegroom is the predicted SIGN of the coming Son of Man. His ascension from the earth was the SIGN given as proof that He had been rejected, and

was returning to the Father. May it not be that the rapture of those saints "accounted worthy to stand before the Son of Man," is designed by our Lord to be the unmistakable SIGN to the world that His Second Coming is at hand. These, I understand, make up the complement of the firstfruits before the throne (REV. xiv. 4).

These raptured ones I regard as represented by the wise virgins, who, being ready, arose, trimmed their lamps, and went in with the bridegroom to the marriage. The parable of the virgins gives the truth of rapture, not resurrection. It does not refer to those who have died and are raised from the dead by the Lord, but to the removal and going in with the bridegroom on the part of prepared ones who are living when the midnight cry is made. Mark the words: "Behold! the bridegroom cometh! go ye out to meet Him" (MATT. xxv, 6).

I have never seen any satisfactory explanation as to what the SIGN of the SON OF MAN will be, and I will ask again: May not the rapture of the latest addition from the earth, of those "accounted worthy to stand before the SON OF MAN"—the Lamb on Mount Zion—be the astonishing sign to the world that the Lord is at the door? Will the world read that sign?

Evidently the SIGN of the SON OF MAN will be of such a character that it cannot be ignored by those who are on the earth. Whatever that sign, it will be obvious to the knowledge of the dwellers on earth. It causes great mourning and anticipation of solemn and impending judgment. Few things could so deeply impress the whole

earth, or so fittingly inaugurate the times of breach in natural sequence which will mark the intervention of our Lord in the last days of this age, as the removal of the residue of the firstfruits, raptured from among men.

It will be seen, therefore, that the position I maintain is this: I do not believe that one of the dead or living saints will be left behind when our Lord descends to raise the sleeping, and to change the living members of His body. That time is distinctly the time of the harvest, as distinguished from the firstfruits, and is clearly defined in 1 Cor. xv, 51, 52; 1 Thess. iv, 16, 17, and Rev. xiv, 14-16. I suggest that the redeemed, cleansed, and consecrated followers of the Lamb have in all ages been taken to the position, association, and glories which are identified with the firstfruits, of whom it is written: "These are they which were not defiled with women. These are they which follow the Lamb withersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men; and in their mouth was found no guile, for they are without fault before the throne of God" (Rev. xiv, 4, 5).

This view certainly yields intelligent meaning and constant application to those Scriptures which have pleaded with believers in *every* age to walk so that they might "be accounted worthy to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke xxi, 36; Rev. iii, 10-12). Beside this, it does *not* attempt to determine, as, I believe, the Scriptures do determine, the actual time of the rapture of the Church (the harvest), which evidently takes place when our Lord descends into the air (1 Thess. iv, 16-17).

There has been much fruitless discussion as to whether

the rapture of the Church will or will not be secret, *i.e.*, unknown to the world. I do not think this is revealed; neither do I regard it as important. The ascension of our Lord, however, does not appear to have been witnessed by any but the disciples themselves. Whether this should guide our thought or not, I cannot tell (Acts i, 3, 9-11). Certainly the removal (whether it be the residue of the firstfruits or the harvest) the world cannot be ignorant of long. There will doubtless be a great cry throughout the world, even as in Egypt on the night of the avenging angel's visit.

It will occur to some that these sudden removals from the earth will surely induce reflection and repentance among men. In many cases, I doubt not, it will be so. The door of mercy will not be altogether closed to the inhabitants of the earth, after the Church is removed. There yet remaineth the gleanings, which will be gathered during the time of the great tribulation. These gleanings, as we have seen, will comprehend the martyred saints, and all who, having obtained mercy of the Lord, escape the devastating tyranny of the Antichrist. In those days will be fulfilled the solemn words of God, given to the prophet Amos: "Behold! the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine on the earth: not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east: and shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it" (Amos viii, 12, 11).

From the testimony of Scripture concerning the iniquity

and atheistic blasphemy of the last days, I gather that, when the first tremendous surprise produced by the removal of the Church is over, there will set in a coarse, sceptical, reactionary spirit, which probably had its foreshadowing in the days of the rapture by the chariots of fire of the great prophet Elijah.

It may be remembered that, immediately the rapture took place, a rationalistic committee was formed in the school of the prophets. This committee sent out a special contingent of fifty strong men, who for three days gave consistent materialistic search for the missing man of God. Their business was to find the prophet, and to this end they were to be particularly careful to explore every cavern, crevice, and perpendicular rock in the whole district round about.

Elijah, according to their view, might even then be sitting desolate upon some projecting crag, from whose summit he found it impossible to descend, much less ascend. His remarkable departure was clearly a "breach of natural order." In vain did Elisha tell them of "the chariots of fire, and the horses of fire." In vain did he say: "Ye shall not send" (2 KINGS ii, 11-15). The sons of the prophets were not accustomed to give place to the strong will of an enthusiastic ploughman. True, fifty of their number had been to view the whole scene, but they were quite unsettled as to the nature of the phenomenon presented. The intense light and the whirlwind! Well, those items were capable of explanation! Beside this, Elisha was the only man who distinctly affirmed the fact of the rapture, and might it

not have been on his part an optical illusion? Spiritual facts are so difficult to analyse, and they constantly border on fanaticism. Thus it came to pass that they said unto Elisha: "Behold, now, there be with thy servants, fifty strong men: let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master; lest peradventure the Spirit hath taken him up and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley" (verse 16). Despite the prophet's resolute protest, we read: "And when they urged him, until he was ashamed, he said: Send! They sent, therefore, fifty men (all rationalists); and they sought three days, but found him not" (verses 16, 17).

With scepticism of such a character *in the school of the prophets*, we can hardly affect surprise at the effect produced amongst the idolaters who dwelt in Bethel. It is evident that the taking up of the prophet by a whirlwind in the chariot of fire was soon turned into ribald jest. We read that as Elisha was on his way to Bethel a young and godless crowd came out of the city. They mocked God's prophet, and cried: "Go up, thou bald head! Go up, thou bald head!" (verse 23). These words were in evident allusion to the taking up of Elisha's great master. From this scene I gather that probably a similar ribald blasphemy may follow the removal of the Church of Christ in the closing day of this corrupt age. It will scarcely be necessary to say to my readers that this act of judgment—the death and wounding of forty-two of their number by two she-bears—does not apply to little children, in the sense in which we use the term. Minors up to twenty years of age, in those days, were

denominated children. Strong, corrupt, and ungodly youths are here referred to (2 KINGS ii, 23, 24).

Pool, in his "Annotations," says: "*Forty and two children:* the Hebrew word signifies, not little children only, but those also who are grown up" (*see* GEN. xxxii, 22, 32; xxxiii, 1; and xxxvii, 30). It is evident that little children, unable to discern between right and wrong, would not be in the least likely to utter this ribald blasphemy. Beside this, Bethel was a stronghold of idolatry. This gross insult offered to Elisha was directed not only against himself, but through him to the majesty of the God of Israel.

CHAPTER XXXII.

BREVITY OF PROPHETIC STATEMENT.

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (JOHN v, 28, 29).

"And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him" (LUKE iv, 16-20).

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn" (ISA. lxi, 1, 2).

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 PETER iii, 10-13).

CALL THEM IN.

"Call them in!"—the poor, the wretched
Sin-stained wand'rers from the fold:
Peace and pardon freely offer:
Can you weigh their worth with gold?
"Call them in!" the weak, the weary,
Laden with the doom of sin;
Bid them come and rest in Jesus;
He is waiting; "call them in!"

"Call them in, the Jew, the Gentile,
Bid the strangers to the feast;
"Call them in!" the rich, the noble,
From the highest to the least—
Forth the Father runs to meet them,
He hath all their sorrows seen;
Robe, and ring, and royal sandals
Wait the lost ones; "call them in!"

"Call them in!" the broken-hearted,
Cowering 'neath the brand of shame;
Speak love's message low and tender,
"'Twas for sinners Jesus came."
See; the shadows lengthen round us,
Soon the day-dawn will begin:
Can you leave them lost and lonely?
Christ is coming; "call them in!"

CHAPTER XXXII.

BREVITY OF PROPHETIC STATEMENT.

IT is expedient that I should deal with a passage in the fifth chapter of John's gospel which presents to many minds a great difficulty concerning the final resurrection. The words spoken by our Lord are thus given. Speaking of the dead, He says: "They shall hear my voice, and come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation" (verse 29).

It is affirmed that these words indicate a simultaneous resurrection on the part both of the just and the unjust. The explanation is not difficult. Our Lord shall indeed be heard by all that are in their graves, but, according to the repeated and conclusive testimonies which have been adduced, there will be an interval of *a thousand years* between the resurrection of the just and the resurrection of the unjust.

Let it be remembered that in this address, which

treats of spiritual life, death, and resurrection, our Lord is dealing with the great questions themselves, and does not enter into particulars which are found in other parts of the Divine Word. The word of God is not contradictory. If we come in contact with a passage which does not appear to agree with the burden of Scripture testimony on the same subject, we may be sure that the passage, with its seeming difficulty, has a satisfactory explanation somewhere. In the case before us it would be an arbitrary proceeding to insist that this verse either nullifies or contradicts the testimony which we have seen to be the burden of Scripture teaching on the great question of the two future resurrections.

The prophetic testimonies in Scripture are often stated in a very concise form, and yet they embrace the whole interval comprehended in the first and the close of the second advent. The apportionment of the parts of an extended prophecy to specific times must be governed by great dispensational verities revealed in the Word of God. These main lines which shew out the divine purpose are absolutely essential, if we would understand and work out by the light of the prophetic word the purpose of God.

A similar and striking illustration of the verse quoted is found in the Gospel of Luke. In chapter iv, 16-21, we read, concerning our Lord, these memorable words: "And Jesus came to Nazareth. And he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written: The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because

he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor, he hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Our Lord then closed the book, and said: "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

Here we have the exposition of Isaiah's prophecy by the Lord Himself. How entirely it accords with His ministry and miracles is obvious. We turn, however, to Isaiah, to find that a part of the prophecy only was read by our Lord (*see* chapter lxi, 1-4). We are confronted with the fact that He stopped abruptly in the middle of the second verse. The whole verse reads, and is punctuated as follows: "To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn."

We ask the question, Why did the Lord suddenly stop at this point, close the book, and give it to the minister? Is not this the conclusive answer, that our Lord, when He came at the first advent, had nothing whatever to do with the fulfilment of that part of the prophecy which belonged "to the day of vengeance of our God"? He came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. His mission at that time comprehended the presentation of Himself to Israel and His death as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." He comes again the second time, and then the awful cry will be heard: "The great day of the wrath of the Lamb is come, and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. vi, 17).

Let it be carefully noted that our Lord's action at

Nazareth, and our knowledge of dispensational teaching, makes plain that which otherwise we could not have understood. The acceptable year of the Lord is, in Isaiah's comprehensive prophecy, separated by a comma only, from "the day of vengeance of our God." We know that that comma separated an interval which has already extended to nineteen centuries, and the day of vengeance is yet future.

Our Lord came before as the Saviour and friend of sinners. He comes again. The following is the solemn testimony of Enoch, the seventh from Adam, as he is called: "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands (myriads, R.V.) of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him" (JUDE xiv, 15).

A similar difficulty is found by some in 2 PET. iii, 10-14, where the Apostle says: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works which are therein shall be burned up." Evidently the apostle is dealing with the whole of the day of the Lord, *i.e.*, the Millennial Age.

It will be affirmed that those who deny the personal and pre-Millennial advent of our Lord believe that He comes to the judgment of the ungodly, but that His coming will be at the end of the world. We reply: let a careful examination of the group of chapters in Isaiah's pro-

phecy (*e.g.*, lix-lxvi), and it must be clear as noonday that the prophet is portraying the bright earthly future which awaits God's people Israel.

The 59th chapter of Isaiah thus describes the fearful conditions which exist at the close of this wicked and adulterous age: "In transgressing and lying against the Lord, and departing away from our God; speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood; and judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off, for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter; yea, truth falleth: and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey (is accounted mad, *margin*); and the Lord saw, and it displeased him that there was no judgment. And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore his arm brought salvation, and his righteousness, it sustained him; for he put on righteousness as a breast-plate, and a helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with it as a cloke. According to their deeds, accordingly will he repay: fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies; so shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy (Antichrist) shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him; and the Redeemer shall come to Zion (the actual time of the Lord's return), and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord."

Blessed as the reign of Christ will have been, when Satan is loosed out of his prison, he will for a brief space go forth and deceive the nations. These revolt against

Israel, and come up in open rebellion, and "compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city" (Jerusalem) (REV. xx, 8, 9).

The final and fearful intervention from heaven is given in these awful words: "Fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them, and the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (verse 9). Such is the testimony of God concerning the close even of the Millennial Age.

How conclusively does this prove that man has fallen. His natural wickedness comes out when occasion serves. How this remarkable passage emphasises the solemn truth of the fall given in GEN. iii. Rev. A. Saphir, D.D., has pointed out with great force that, prior to the fall of Adam, all within God's fair and beautiful creation was rest and peace. This is equally true of the condition given in the closing scene in REV. xxii, 1-5. The interval "is a vast parenthesis," during which the accursed disturbers, sin and Satan, shew that wherever sin is committed and the devil submitted to, disorder, curse, sorrow, and death inevitably follow. At this crisis the final judgment takes place.

These thoughts will help in giving a clear insight into the passage quoted from 2 PETER iii. The Apostle is dealing with the final destruction of this earth, and the new heavens, and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. He had dealt clearly with Christ's Coming Kingdom in the first chapter of this letter, and, beyond a slight allusion to that kingdom, he is dealing with the judgments which usher in and close the day of the Lord.

Judgment will inaugurate the Millennial day, solemn, even THE FINAL JUDGMENT closes it.

At this great crisis Israel is restored to the divine favour. Hence we read: "As for me, this is my covenant (the new covenant, *see* HEB. viii, 8-13) with them, saith the Lord: my spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever."

In chap. lx we find fulfilled the prophetic words of Simeon, when, with the Holy King in his arms, he said: "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation: A light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel" (LUKE ii, 30-32). Well may the seraphic Isaiah sing: "Arise and shine! for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee; for behold darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall rise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee; and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (ISA. x, 1-3).

Then follows the gathering of Israel and the spread of the glory of the sun of righteousness, "even to the isles afar off upon the sea, which have not heard his fame, or seen his glory. Yea, the forces of the Gentiles" (India, China, Africa, and Japan) "shall now stretch out their hands unto the Lord." Now also: "Lift up thine eyes, (O Israel) round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee; thy sons come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side." God's

people Israel are here described in process of national reconstruction in their own land (verses 4-6).

Now follow the vast accumulations of wealth and substance, brought by Israel and Judah to the land promised to Abraham, and to his seed for ever as an everlasting possession. Now, the earthly glory of Jerusalem is seen; the treading down spoken of by our Lord, during the times of the Gentiles, "the desolations of many generations" give place to the great grandeur and massive realities of the earthly city of the great King. "Instead of brass, gold is brought; for iron silver; for wood brass; and for stones, iron. The glory of Lebanon shall come to thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary! and I will make the place of my feet glorious. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls salvation and thy gates praise (verses 8-18).

In view of His personal presence, whose glory is "above the brightness of the sun at midday," no wonder that it is written: "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be thy everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land for ever; the branch of my planting; the work of my hands, that I may be glorified: A little one shall become a thousand, a small one a strong nation. I the Lord will hasten it in his time" (Isa. lx, 19-22).

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CONCERNING THE DAY OF THE LORD.

"Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt: And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames. Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger" (ISAIAH xiii, 6-13).

THE BRIDAL DAY.

The Bridegroom comes!
  Bride of the Lamb, awake!
The midnight cry is heard;
  Thy sleep forsake.

The marriage-day
  Has come; lift up thy head,
Put on thy bridal robe,
  The feast is spread.

Shake off earth's dust,
  And wash thy weary feet;
Arise, make haste, go forth,
  The Bridegroom greet.

Sing the new song!
  Thy triumph has begun;
Thy tears are wiped away.
  Thy night is done!

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CONCERNING THE DAY OF THE LORD.

WE at this point deal with a kindred difficulty. In the 7th chapter of the Gospel of John we read: "And this is the Father's will, which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the *last* day. And again, this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the *last* day" (verses 39, 40).

The expression, the *last* day, is regarded by many as a supreme difficulty, and for this reason: they understand the term to apply to the final end. I venture to affirm that the explanation is simple and satisfactory. It is clear that the word day is variously used in the Scriptures. It has several significations.

In one place our Lord thus speaks: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is called *day;* the night cometh when no man can work" (JOHN ix, 4). In

another: "Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and saw it, and was glad" (JOHN viii, 56). In another, saying to Jerusalem concerning His rejection: "If thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes" (LUKE xix, 42). So, also, concerning the times of the preaching of the Gospel: "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation" (2 COR. vi, 2). It is evident that the word *day* in all these cases denotes a certain undefined measure of time, and is not to be understood of a period either of twelve or twenty-fours hours.

Let us now refer to some of the striking passages which deal with the remarkable expression, "the day of the Lord." The prophet Isaiah thus breaks forth: "Howl ye! for the day of the Lord is at hand! it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty." And again: "Behold the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate, and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it; for the stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof, shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity, and will lay low the haughtiness of the people" (ISA. xiii, 6-11). So also Peter: "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come" (ACTS ii, 20).

So also Zechariah, chap. xiv, whose prophecy gives a series of the events which transpire at the time of our

Lord's second advent: "Behold the day of the Lord cometh!" (verse 1), and again at verses 6, 7: "And it shall come to pass in that day, the light shall not be clear or dark: but it shall be one day which shall be known unto the Lord, not day nor night: but it shall come to pass that at evening-time it shall be light." So also our Lord, speaking of the same great day, saith: "Of that day knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven; neither the Son; but the Father" (MARK xiii, 32). So also John: "For the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" (REV. vi, 17). The term *day* in these passages evidently refers to the awful day of the sudden and overwhelming judgments of God, and which will be comprehended within one day of twenty-four hours. The expressions, "one day," "great and notable day," and "at evening-time it shall be light," clearly teach this.

We now notice the use of the word *day* where obviously it refers to the whole Millennial Age. Peter writes: "We have a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto we do well to take heed in our hearts, until the *day* dawn and the day star arise" (2 PET. i, 19). This is the dawn of the morning of the Millennial day, the earth's Sabbath, which in the judgment of God is declared to be as one day—a thousand years as one day" (2 PET. iii, 8).

Of this *day* David sang: "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps. cxviii, 23, 24); the blessed day concerning which it is

written: "The Lord shall be king over all the earth, in that *day* there shall be one Lord, and his name one" (ZECH. xiv, 9); the day in view of which the heirs of God, and the joint-heirs with Christ, are called "the children of the light and of the *day*" (1 THESS. v, 5); the day concerning which Paul said: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that *day*" (2 TIM. i, 12); the bright and blessed day, "in which the light of the moon shall be as the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound" (ISA. xxx, 26). Of this coming glorious day we are not in ignorance.

We who maintain our Lord's pre-Millennial advent, we also firmly believe that every child of God, whose body sleeps in the tomb, will be raised by our Lord at the last DAY. But in the light of these Scriptural proofs of the diverse meanings of the term day, we ask: Can it be insisted on that our Lord meant the last day, just prior to the final judgment? Why should it not be at the last day of this evil age? Or, as in my deliberate judgment it is, the early morning of the last day—the seventh, the Sabbath, the Millennial day? I am entitled to press this question. Let our Lord answer: "Behold, I come quickly! I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify these things in the churches. I am the root and the off-spring of David, and the bright and morning star" (REV. xxii, 12-16). Yes, indeed, as the morning star He cometh to raise the sleeping dead, and change the living

saints which are on earth, in the early dawn of the morning of the cloudless day. "As it began to dawn," Christ had already risen (MATT. xxviii, 1).

We may rest assured that there will be no delay beyond the time appointed of the Father. Let us recall the joyous truth that when the day of Pentecost was fully come there was no further delay. At the third hour, 9 A.M. of that memorable day, the inhabitants of Jerusalem were filled with wonder and amazement at the mighty power of the Holy Ghost, seen in the hundred and twenty disciples who were filled with the energy, beauty, and variety of the life of their ascended Lord.

The greater day draws near. Then will the bright and morning star be seen in the heavens. Then will the resurrection and rapture of the harvest of the Church take place. From that point onward the moral and physical darkness of the earth shall give place to the scene in which the sons of light shall shine forth in transfigured glory. To use the glorious words of our blessed Lord: "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (MATH. xiii, 43).

According to the post-Millenial view, the saints rise not until the final day. This extraordinary theory denies the real personal presence of the King on earth until the end of the reign and the consummation of all things is reached It necessarily ignores one great purpose for which the Church was formed, viz., to live and reign with Christ over the whole earth during the Millennial Age. This theory is inconsistent with the whole scope and tenor of Scripture prophecy. It impairs the homogeneity of the

Word of God, and takes away assured confidence in the appearing of the glory of the great God our Saviour. This confidence was designed to be the expectant and joyous hope of the Church in every age. Our Lord continually taught, not only the fact, but the imminency of His coming Evidently our Lord spake in the light of such certainty and possibility (*see* specially MARK xiii, 32-37). The theory of the post-Millennialist is that our Lord will not come until the end of the thousand years. Where is there room for imminency in this view?

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE TIMES OF THE REGENERATION.

"Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that has forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first" (MATT. xix, 27-30).

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed" (ACTS iii, 19-25).

"For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (ROM. viii, 19-23).

All that I *was*,—my sin, my guilt,
My death was all my own ;
All that I *am*, I owe to thee,
My gracious God alone.

The evil of my former state
Was mine and only mine ;
The good in which I now rejoice
Is thine and only thine.

The darkness of my former state,
The bondage all was mine ;
The light of life in which I walk,
The liberty is thine.

Thy grace first made me feel my sin,
It taught me to believe ;
Then, in believing peace I found,
And now I live, I live.

All that I am, even here on earth,
All that I hope to be,
When Jesus comes and glory dawns,
I owe it, Lord, to thee.

BONAR.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE TIMES OF THE REGENERATION.

TWICE only in the New Testament is the word "regeneration" found—once in direct connection with, and to illustrate, the nature of the spiritual change which every believer undergoes when born again and brought from the power and dominion of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. i, 13). Thus we read: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing (laver) of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus ii, 5).

Regeneration here stands for the salvation, cleansing, renewal, and partnership in the divine nature which results, not from anything which we have done, but as the direct consequence of the grace and kindness of God appearing

to man. Regeneration is declared to be the outcome of this sovereign and divine manifestation. Let us carefully note the following great facts declared in the context.

First, the denial of practical ungodliness on the part of all those who are regenerated (verse 11). Next, the living of a sober, righteous, and godly life in this present evil world (verse 12). Thus we get the overthrow of the power of sin, and the subjection of the believer in spirit, soul, and body to the Lord. Then, finally, the regenerated are spoken of as "looking for the blessed hope, and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (TITUS ii, 13, R.V.).

Now turning to the word "regeneration" as first used by our Lord, and found in the Gospel of the King, we read: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (MATT. xix, 28). Now it is evident that the term "regeneration" is identified with the coming earthly kingdom and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Certainly there is no need for regeneration in heaven: neither are there twelve tribes of Israel who shall be ruled over in the eternal state by the Apostles. That is not the teaching of the Word of God concerning heaven; but it is clearly our Lord's teaching in regard to the coming Millennial Age.

Again, is it not remarkable that our Lord should

call His kingdom the "regeneration," if there be no equivalent to the conditions and changes which are associated with the use of the word in TITUS? But there are the precise equivalents. It is important to remember that the Greek word translated "regeneration" practically means "a beginning over again." Hence our Lord is called "the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in" (ISAIAH lviii, 12). Sin's desolations shall give place before the wisdom of the Holy One into whose hands all power in heaven and on earth is committed.

How suggestive is this, when we consider that in the one case "regeneration" stands for the direct and blessed results which come of the grace and kindness of God toward man, personally considered. In the other, the term "regeneration" stands for the divine redemption and renovation which, when our Lord appears, shall certainly free the earth from its present bondage of corruption. Thus, whilst the heirs of God through regeneration are being prepared for the coming glory, the earth, through His mighty regeneration and renewal, will, when He comes, be fitted for the manifestation of that glory.

Well is it written: "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together (with us, R.V.) until now. Waiting." For what? Human progress? For scientific discovery? No. Hearken! "waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God: waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body; because the creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of

corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God" (Rom. viii, 21-23). The Church and the world alike will then know what "regeneration" means, and why its significant import was chosen by our Lord to illustrate the wonderful changes which are effected by God in the renewed man, and which shall be also effected in the regenerated and renewed earth (*see* Rev. x, 5-7).

Nor must we fail to bear in mind that, as in the experience of the regenerated man there comes the actual time when he passes from the dominion of sin and satan into the freedom of the kingdom of God's dear Son; so, also, when the times of "the regeneration" arrive, the earth shall suddenly and certainly pass from the power of the God of this age into the righteousness and peace which will be identified with our Lord's coming government and reign (*see* Rev. xi 15-18).

As certainly as the appearing of the grace and kindness of God produces in all those who believe, a sober, righteous, and godly life; so, also, shall His appearing secure similar issues for the world which is now dominated by the power of sin. "Intemperate," "unrighteous," "ungodly," truthfully describes man's present condition; "soberness," "righteousness," and "godliness" will be the marked characteristics of human life in the times of the regeneration.

Another interesting parallelism is worthy of notice. The Millennial Age, though righteous, blessed, and holy, will not be absolutely free from sin. This condition belongs to the Eternal State. During the times of the re-

generation it is written: "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner, being an hundred years old, shall be accursed" (ISAIAH lv, 20). So, also, in principle at this time: "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life which now is" (1 TIMOTHY iv, 8). The individual subjects of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ are sober, righteous, and godly; but not in any absolute sense are they free from sin, whilst ordinary experience shews many lives, so far as this world is concerned, to have been forfeited.

Those who are the subjects of the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, make no claim to absolute holiness. These, by deed of gift, share the moral perfection of the Son of God. Through the Spirit they wait for the hope of righteousness by faith, and when Christ our life shall appear then (not before) shall we also appear with Him in glory. Then, as members of His Body, we shall fully share His divine nature and glory. In the light of these wondrous truths, how glorious to the Church is the approach of the times of the regeneration! It is then that the heirs of God, and the joint-heirs with Christ, shall be manifested, and enter their incorruptible home. It is then when the spared residue of Israel and of the inhabitants of the earth become the ministers of righteousness; the godly seed also, which from the human side, people the earth with untold millions of the godly, righteous, and sober. It is then, when death and

disease shall beat a retreat before the face of the Lord of health and life. Then shall thy earth yield her wondrous increase and blossom abundantly as the garden of the Lord. Then "God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him." (PSALM lxvii, 6, 7).

LIFE'S PRAISE.

Fill Thou my life, O Lord my God,
In every part with praise;
That my whole being may proclaim
Thy being and Thy ways.

Not for the lip of praise alone,
Nor even the praising heart,
I ask, but for a life made up
Of praise in every part.

Praise in the common things of life,
Its goings out and in,
Praise in each duty and each deed,
However small and mean.

Praise in the common words I speak,
Life's common looks and tones,
In intercourse at hearth or board
With my beloved ones.

So shalt Thou, Lord, from me, even me,
Receive the glory due,
And so shall I begin on earth
The song for ever new.

So shall no part of day or night
From sacredness be free,
But all my life, in every step,
Be fellowship with Thee.

BONAR.

CHAPTER XXXV.

CONCERNING ISRAEL AND JUDAH.

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the SON OF MAN" (LUKE xxi, 20-36).

THE VOICE FROM GALILEE.

"Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace" (JOHN i, 16).

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
Come unto me and rest;
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
Thy head upon my breast.
I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary, and worn, and sad,
I found in Him a resting-place,
And He has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
Behold I freely give
The living water,—thirsty one,
Stoop down, and drink, and live.
I came to Jesus and I drank
Of that life-giving stream:
My thirst was quench'd, my soul revived,
And now I live in Him.

BONAR.

CHAPTER XXXV.

CONCERNING ISRAEL AND JUDAH.

IN any intelligent statement concerning the second coming of our Lord, account must be taken of the part and place which Israel has in the future purposes of God. Indeed, if we can ascertain the mind of God in regard to the house of Israel, we may be satisfied that we have found the key to the position either in conclusive favour of, or in complete opposition to, the great truth of the Lord's pre-Millennial advent.

When our Lord, in His memorable prophecy recorded by the Evangelist LUKE, said: "Verily, I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away until all be fulfilled" (chap. xxi, 32), I understand our Lord to refer to the chosen generation of the Israelitish house and people. I am aware that this statement will arouse keen criticism from some of my readers. Let us therefore

carefully deal with the portion of Scripture which contains the context of these remarkable words.

In the Gospel of LUKE, chapter xxi, we shall find the whole of our Lord's comprehensive prophecy in which these words are found. In some of the features we are reminded of the statements to which attention has already been directed in MATTHEW xxiv, but from the 20th verse onward to the close of the chapter we have a brief and graphic summary which evidently comprehends the whole interval between the time of the overthrow of Jerusalem and the gathering together of the glorified Church to stand before the SON OF MAN. I earnestly commend the careful reading of these seventeen verses before proceeding further. They may be found on page 357.

This prophecy was uttered by our Lord in the early part of the year 34, A.D. I know nothing more confirmatory of the Divine character of our Lord as the Holy One of Israel than the prophetic testimony here given. He speaks: "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh" (verse 21). Mark the Holy Seer looking down the stream of time, and calmly telling of the fearful and terrible overthrow which was accomplished by the Romans under Titus, in the year 70, A.D. Having given careful instruction for the guidance of His disciples at that time of national desolation and destruction, our Lord adds: "There shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people" (verse 23).

It is not necessary to do more than point out the awful

fulfilment of this prophecy which took place at that time. Our Lord then adds: "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (verse 24). The terrible and devastating slaughter which accompanied the overthrow of Jerusalem, I need not enlarge upon. I cannot refrain, however, from asking careful attention to the momentous words concerning the leading away and scattering of Israel and Judah among all nations.

I purposely use the terms Israel and Judah, not only because I desire to express clearly my strong conviction against the "Anglo-Israel" theory, which has had so brief a popularity, and, in my judgment, so crude a representation; but because I find the names Judah and Israel used interchangeably in the Scriptures again and again—*e.g.*, in the EPISTLE to the ROMANS.

Now, where are the people which the Lord Jesus said should be "led captive into all nations"? This was a most extraordinary prediction, and yet at the close of the nineteenth century, and after the lapse of sixty generations since the time the words were uttered, this people are still found scattered over the whole earth, and yet not identified with any nation.

It is the Jew in Germany, Russia, France, Greece, Turkey, Italy, or Spain. It is the Israelite in England, in America, in Australia. The Jewish people have not taken the name of any of the nations among whom they are found. Prince Bismarck, only a few months since,

was heard complaining bitterly of the loss of, and care for further identity with German nationality on the part of vast numbers who have left the Fatherland for the New Western World.

It is the fact that Germans, English, French, Irish—or, indeed, any other of the varied nationalities which go there—are willingly and rapidly absorbed in the great Transatlantic Commonwealth. All these seek citizenship in the republic of the United States. They assume the *rôle* and title of American subjects, and are known simply as having once borne the name of the country from whence they came out. Not so the Jew, or the men who bear the honoured name of Israel. That name, Israel (meaning "a prince of God"), was never designed by God for absorption among the nations of the world. One generation is ample for the change from the title of an Englishman to that of an American citizen; sixty generations have not sufficed, in any part of the world, to induce the descendants of Abraham to subscribe themselves by other title than the divinely given name of Israel. Well might Isaiah, as he looked upon the glory of Israel in the Millennial Age, speak concerning this name: "One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord; and surname himself by the name of ISRAEL" (ISA. xliv, 5). This name, which is to be so grandly prominent in the future, is not likely to be absorbed or lost in the present.

Let every reader remember that in this remarkable and

unique fact, which is of world-wide experience, and has continued for nineteen centuries, we have a remarkable fulfilment of the Lord's words, who declared: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (LUKE xxi, 33). Nor is this all. Our Lord also says: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled" (verse 24); and now carefully notice, that from the time of the overthrow of Jerusalem until this day those words have literally been maintained. Yes, despite her great wealth, her remarkable situation, her historic interest, her prominence, or all in her history which relates to Christianity, despite her wondrous past, Jerusalem lies trodden down as our Lord declared she would be until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled (run out).

Neither emperor, nor pope, military prowess nor crusaders, expenditure of life and fiery zeal, has sufficed to rescue Jerusalem from the hands of those who have "trodden her down." Even more than this, for upon the very site where once the beautiful Temple stood and the Shekinah glory rested, stands another temple, long since dedicated to the worship of the false prophet. We recall the words of the rejected King: "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (MATT. xxiii, 38).

Shall we not fear Him who thus sketched in few words with marvellous accuracy the history of Israel and Jerusalem during the protracted interval between His going away and His coming again? Our Lord, be it observed,

carefully distinguishes between the "times of the Gentiles," during which Jerusalem shall be trodden down, and His own times, when He shall reign as the blessed and only Potentate over the whole world. Jerusalem, beautiful for situation, shall be the "joy of the whole earth," and "the city of the Great King"—where His throne and government shall be, and whereto "all nations shall flow" (Ps. xlviii, 2). "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. ii, 2-4).

But we proceed with the prophetic testimony. Our Lord then adds: "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity! and the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in

a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh" (LUKE xxi, 25-28).

After this statement, surely no thoughtful student of Scripture will affirm that these great prophecies have had their fulfilment. Those which concern the overthrow and treading down of Jerusalem, the scattering of the Jewish people, we have seen, either as having been or as being now in process of accomplishment. We are bound, therefore, to ask whether these subsequent prophecies have had their fulfilment, or whether that fulfilment is not hidden in the future?

Not to enlarge unnecessarily, I ask: When and where, since our Lord spake these words, have there been the predicted "signs in the sun, and the moon and, the stars"? When were "the powers of heaven shaken," so that "men's hearts were failing them for fear, looking after those things which were coming on the earth"? When and where, in the history of the Church, is it recorded that the SON OF MAN was seen "in power and great glory, coming in the clouds of heaven"?

I press these questions because in verses 32 and 33 our Lord says: "Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled; heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away!" Now, seeing that these prophecies have never yet been fulfilled, how can it be affirmed that the whole scope of this prophecy belonged

to that generation in which Christ uttered His memorable words?

I readily acknowledge that if the overthrow of Jerusalem and the world-wide scattering of the Jewish people only is referred to, I see no objection to the appreciation of the word in this last-mentioned sense; but the word generation in that sense cannot possibly refer to events which happened more than nineteen centuries since, and embrace others which to this day have not had fulfilment. When, however, it is borne in mind that the term "generation" is used in varying senses, sometimes denoting a race or people, sometimes being used in a generic sense; at other times in the sense in which we ordinarily use it as "from father to son," is it not a very arbitrary proceeding to maintain that in this passage it must be taken in this last sense?

I feel ready to ask some brethren, whom I greatly honour, when they press for this interpretation of the word, whether their action does not seriously impinge upon the veracity of Him who uttered the prophecy? Certainly, if the full meaning and scope of these predictions had their fulfilment, either at Pentecost or the overthrow of Jerusalem and the dispersion of Israel, we may as well give up attempting the careful and clear exposition of Scripture.

Finally, I direct attention to two or three passages in which the word "generation" is used in a different sense from that of "from father to son." John the Baptist, speaking to the Pharisees, said: "O generation of vipers!

who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (MATT. iii, 7). Our Lord uses these words: "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light" (LUKE xvi, 8). Peter uses this term of all believers: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood" (1 PET. ii, 9). So also we read: "God is in the generation of the righteous;" so also "the generation of the wicked" is spoken of; Solomon also says: "There is a generation pure in their own eyes"—"a generation whose teeth are as swords"—"a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother" (PROV. xxx, 11-14).

Now in all these cases the word "generation" is used in the sense of race, people, or house, or to define condition, quality, or character. Dean Alford maintains that our Lord used the expression "generation" in the sense of "race"—"this Jewish house or people." In the light of the Millennial times, face to face with the fact of the exceeding prominence which Israel as a people shall have in the magnificent future, nothing could be more fitting or appropriate than the words: "Verily, I say unto you, this generation" (this Jewish house—this princely generation, Israel, WHOM GOD hath chosen) "shall not pass away till all be fulfilled." "Remember, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art My servant: I have formed thee; thou art My servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of Me . . . . . Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer . . . . that confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt

be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof.' (ISAIAH xliv, 21, 24, 26).

Fear not, thou daughter of Zion,
  He cometh, He cometh, thy King!
He cometh in lowly greatness,
  Lift up thy voice and sing!
He hast'neth with love and blessing;
  With glory and light to thee;
'Tis the day of the great salvation,
  'Tis the year of jubilee.

As the Prince of peace He cometh,
  The Desire of the nations He;
As the Bridegroom He appeareth,
  At midnight; awake and see!
As the King of earth He cometh,
  As the theme of creation's song;
Let heaven begin the chorus,
  And earth its notes prolong.

He cometh to spoil the spoiler,
  To avenge and judge and reign;
He cometh to bind the strong one
  In the everlasting chain.
He came once in shame and weakness,
  As the bearer of human sin,
He cometh in royal splendour
  His kingdom to begin.

He hath gone to receive his sceptre,
  He returns as the crowned King;
Break forth, O creation, in triumph,
  Oh, lift up thy voice and sing.
Fear thou not, daughter of Zion,
  And fear not, thou burdened earth,
The day of redemption cometh,
  The day of thy second birth!

BONAR.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

ISRAEL REINSTATED IN HER NATIONAL POSITION.

"Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee. And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious. The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings: and thou shalt know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob. For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in his time" (ISAIAH lx, 9-22).

ZION, AWAKE!

Break forth in song, long-silent earth;
Take up the unforgotten strain;
Spread over vale and hill the mirth
Thall tells of time begun again.

Awake, Jerusalem, rejoice!
Thy night is glimmering into noon.
Zion, arise! lift up thy voice;
Thy sorrows shall be ended soon.

Sounds the deep vesper-bell of time,
Through earth's last tempest slowly borne,
For thee it is the matin-chime,
And to thy sons the note of morn.

Arise, put on thy robe of white;
Deck thee with beauty; let each gem
Sparkle its fairest to the light;
Put on thy crown, Jerusalem!

Thy widowhood is over now;
Strip off thy weeds; in bridal gold
And orient pearls thy glory show,
More regal than in days of old.

Upon thee now the Bridegroom pours
The fulness of an unquench'd love;
He leads thee where the endless stores
Of His own gladness thou shalt prove.

He comes, with His own hand to press
Each wrinkle from thy careworn brow;
'Tis joy, and song, and mirth, and bliss,
All Hallel and Hosanna now.

BONAR.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

ISRAEL REINSTATED IN HER NATIONAL POSITION.

"I SAY, then, hath God cast away his people? God forbid" (Rom. xi, 1). Such are the striking words in which the Apostle disclaims any change in the intention of God concerning His people Israel. I know of nothing more striking in the study of the Lord's pre-Millennial Advent and the contemporary engrafting of Israel, than the remarkable section of the Epistle to the Romans in which the words I have quoted occur. Chapters ix, x, and xi are pre-eminently national and dispensational. They concern almost exclusively the houses of Israel and Judah as the elect of God unto governmental supremacy throughout the Millennial Age. The terms are used interchangeably because the whole house of Israel is dealt with. Their testimony is both historical and prophetic. This part of the Epistle stands out with unique suggestiveness.

Strictly speaking, the argument which concerns the Church of Christ and the individual believer reaches its

culmination at the close of the eighth chapter of this Epistle. Its correlative, viz., the walk and work of the Church and the believer, is taken up at the commencement of chapter xii. We may ask: Why this marvellous parenthesis—this wonderful breach in the Apostle's argument? Is not the answer found in this, that God designed that the Church in Rome might know something of the glory which shall be seen when Israel is "again grafted" in by God to her position as the foremost nation of the earth? Let it be remembered that at this time the whole land of Israel was beneath the despotic sway of the Cæsars. Judea was regarded as a distant and feeble dependency. Abject submission to the Roman Empire had taken the place of those vigorous strivings after national life which characterized the stirring days of the noble Maccabees. Nor this only. These memorable chapters were written after our Lord had been crucified by the Jewish people, and shortly before the overthrow of Jerusalem and the slaughter and captivity of the Jewish house. The Apostle Paul himself had borne witness to the coming desolation, when to the rejecting Jews he said: "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you" (Acts xiii, 41). There can be no question that these solemn words (quoted from the prophet Hab. i, 5) had special reference to the national desolation both of Israel and Judah consequent upon their rejection of Christ.

With these facts in our minds, how remarkable is the

prominent place which the Apostle assigns to Israel in these wonderful chapters. Well may he write, in the gloomy days which, as we know, preceded a still darker night: "God hath not cast away his people, which he foreknew" (Rom. xi, 2). And again, referring to the degenerate times when debased Israel left Elijah to stand alone, he writes: "But what saith the answer of God unto him, I have reserved unto myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Even so then, at this present time, there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (chapter xi, 4, 5).

Imperial Rome may oppress the Israel of God. In her tyranny of strength she may join the princes of this world, and crucify, as a troublesome fanatic, the Lord of Glory, but the time shall assuredly come when the despised Judea colony shall represent the centre of a nation's life before which Rome's Imperial glory shall pale into insignificance. Zion, though trodden down, shall rise again, and when the last of proud Cæsar's representatives have passed away for ever Jerusalem, in her mightiest days the city of the Great King, shall be builded on a scale of magnificent grandeur such as Rome never knew. Hearken: "Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together: whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord" (Psa. cxxii, 3, 4).

With his mind fixed upon the fearful sin of His people, in the rejection of the Christ of God, the apostle speaks in words of irrepressible tenderness; "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that

myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." But he immediately adds: "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect: for they are not all Israel which are of Israel" (Rom. ix, 2-6).

With profound insight into the purpose of God, and with a glowing admiration of His abounding grace, does Paul in these three chapters shew out the past and future history of Israel.

The great truth of the Election of God disclosed in these chapters cannot be clearly understood unless the choice of Israel as the leading nation of the earth during the Millennial Age is clearly recognised. Both history and prophecy attach to Israel in a sense which cannot be affirmed of any other nation on the face of the earth. Neither their present sorrow nor their coming national overthrow availed to shake the faith of the apostle concerning Israel's future glory.

Moved by the Holy Ghost he thus writes: "I say, then, have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles. . . . Now, if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness! . . . For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving be but life from the dead?" (Rom. xi, 11, 12, 15).

How intelligent and blessed is all this! Rejecting their King, God, as we have already seen, overruled, in His abounding grace the crucifixion of our Lord so that the reconciling of the world by the death of His Son became an accomplished fact. In their blindness of heart the Jewish people cried out "Away with him! away with him! Crucify him! Crucify him!" What then? Shall the counsel and purpose of God be overthrown? Had not God sworn with an oath unto David that of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh he would raise up Christ to sit on His throne. That promise has never yet been fulfilled.

Hence the Apostle shews that blindness in part happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written: There shall come out of Zion the deliverer and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is my covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins. Recognising clearly in all this the fulfilment of the divine purpose, how grandly he, as the Apostle of the Gentiles, adds: "As concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election (their coming national earthly prominence and glory), they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without change of mind (Rom. xi, 28, 29).

What a complete answer and reproof do these chapters furnish to the mischievous statements made by certain expositors that since Christ came, the terms Israel and Jerusalem, and the kingdom and reign of Christ are to be understood in a spiritual sense only. Certainly Paul had

no such thoughts in his mind. A real people, whom he called Israel, had been for a season broken off. Their place was for a time being occupied by the Gentiles, and was to be so occupied until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled (run out). Then Israel is to be grafted in again, their receiving by God being described as "life from the dead."

Surely if Israel's national distinction was to pass away and give place to a vast spiritual economy, the Apostle would not have spoken thus! The Church at Rome should certainly have heard fundamental teaching on so vital a theme. It is truth to affirm that these three chapters, standing where they do in the Epistle to the Romans, completely overthrow the spiritualising theories which are so attractive to post-Millennialists.

In conclusion, let us notice the sublime outburst of the apostle concerning the purpose and overruling power of the Eternal God, as evidenced in Israel's rejection, breaking off, and future ingrafting: "O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! for who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

How wonderful is the testimony of these three chapters! Were they not designed of God to rebuke the boastful spirit of the great world power which made light of and despised the people Israel? Doubtless it will come to the minds of someof my readers that the testimony con-

cerning Israel is at once severe and enthusiastic. Even so. I confess to a profound contempt to Saul of Tarsus, as he sits a witness to the stoning of Stephen, actually permitting the slayers to lay their clothes at his feet; but mark it well—he was then unregenerate. The Son of God had not been revealed in Him (GAL. i, 15, 16). The breaking down and the coming in the darkness and the light, the scene outside Damascus had not then been enacted. Now the great change has come. The zealous, religiously bigoted Pharisee has fallen upon the precious stone (Christ). He, too, has seen Jesus at the right hand of God. With what tremendous force Stephen's latest words must have struck the heart and conscience of the Pharisee, now doubly blind, but close to and soon to know Him who is the light and life of men. Let it not be forgotten that in the Apostle Paul, *erstwhile* the man who had letters to bind any, whether men or women, who followed Jesus, and bring them before the chief priests at Jerusalem, we have the Apostle of the Gentiles, the man who, in my judgment, has more wealth, more treasure in heaven than any other, the Lord Jesus alone excepted. He stands as the fitting type (born before the time) of what regenerated Israel shall be. Humanly speaking, five hundred such men would bring Christ to every creature on the face of the earth in seven years. Such men shall Israel rear to fill the earth, and make it blossom as the garden of the Lord. Let us in closing this chapter accentuate the Apostle's words. Let the sorrowful prophet be glad and refresh us, as we wait for Israel's coming glory.

The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying: "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him. But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them. . . . For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord; because they call thee an Outcast, saying, this is Zion, whom no man seeketh after" (JER. xxx, 7, 8, 9, 17).

Again: "Thus saith the Lord: Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof. And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry: and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small. . . . And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God (verses 18, 19, 22). At the same time, saith the Lord, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people. Thus saith the Lord, The people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest. The Lord hath appeared of old to me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee. Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel: thou

shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry. Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria: the planters shall plant and eat them as common things. For there shall be a day that the watchman upon the Mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise, ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God" (chap. xxx, 18; xxxi, 6).

And again: "For thus saith the Lord; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel. Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth (chapter xxxi, 1-8)—"Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. . . . Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord; for wheat and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all. Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old men together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them and make them rejoice from their sorrow" (chap. xxxi, 7-13).

Once more: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity; The Lord bless thee, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness. . . . Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will sow the house of Israel

and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast. And it shall came to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build and to plant, saith the Lord. . . . Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord" (verses 23-32).

Finally hear this: "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the Lord: If heaven above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done saith the Lord" (verses 33-37).

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE ARGUMENT OF CRISIS AND CATASTROPHE.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most high. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early. The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge" (PSALM xlvi).

LUTHER'S HYMN.

A Fortress firm is God our Lord,
  A sure defence and weapon ;
Prompt help in need He doth afford,
  Let happen what may happen.

Of our own might we nothing can,
  We lie forlorn, dejected ;
There fights for us that rightful Man,
  By God's own self elected !

And were this world of devils full,
  For our destruction eager,
That should not our firm faith annul ;
  We would abide their leaguer !

Hold fast that word which must remain,
  Let no dark doubt invade us ;
Christ will be with us on the plain,
  With gifts and grace to aid us !

Fall'n is the prince of this dark world :
  The field our Captain keepeth
Hell and its legions can't us rob :
  For us the kingdom waiteth !

Trans. by ALEXANDER.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE ARGUMENT OF CRISIS AND CATASTROPHE.

AN argument which has powerfully influenced my own judgment, in dealing with this great subject, is found in the fact that the varied statements given in the Word of God concerning the Coming Kingdom of Christ are always identified with the arrival of a definite and great crisis. Nor this only; these crises are accompanied with tremendous and awful catastrophes.

Now if the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour commenced on earth at His first advent, and has been increasing in power ever since, and is to continue to do so, I do not know where to place these sudden and supernatural events. A kingdom in which the truth of God as a mighty moral and spiritual agency is to go on gradually extending the circle of its conquests until all are subject to Christ, leaves no room for the events to which we now direct attention.

To illustrate the position: Our Lord, speaking of the

time of His coming, warns in these words: "Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold he is in the desert; go not forth; behold he is in the secret chambers; believe it not . . . . For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth unto the west, so shall also the coming of the SON OF MAN be." Mark it! A sudden and world-wide manifestation of the power and glory of our Lord in the midst of the terrific storm of "the day of vengeance."

Again, the Apostle writes: "Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night: when they are saying (R.V.) peace and safety! then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape" (1 THESS. v, 2, 3). These expressions, "coming as a thief," and "in the night," "with sudden destruction," are used no less than five or six times in the New Testament, and they in every case teach a time of unexpected crisis.

Further, our Lord adds: "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth" (LUKE xxi, 34, 35). Let it be remembered that these words have direct reference to the coming of the SON OF MAN. They are, however, constantly taken from their primary significance, and made to refer to the mere article of death. Here again we have a supreme crisis reached, accompanied with terrible judgment.

The same truth is vividly portrayed in the parable of

the ten virgins. At midnight a cry was heard: "Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him; . . . And they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut." So, also, in the identity which our Lord assumes in regard to the rejected stone: "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner; whosoever shall fall upon that stone, shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (LUKE xx, 17, 18).

The connection of these words with the prophecy in Daniel cannot fail to strike the student of prophecy. The prophet, interpreting the vision of the King, said: "Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet; part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (DAN. ii, 31-35).

Now there could be no such event as the gradual falling of a stone. Here we are face to face with that supreme and awful crisis when Christ, the living stone, shall instantly descend in great glory, and utterly break in

pieces all existing governmental power. This transpires at the commencement of the "time of restitution of all things" (Acts iii, 21). Gentile power, illustrated by the great image, having reached its last and full development, on account of its wickedness is suddenly dashed in pieces as a potter's vessel. All power and property at this supreme crisis revert to the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ. This intelligent portrayal in the symbolism of the Great Image, of the whole course of the times of the Gentiles, is of the first importance as a guide in the study of that which precedes the Coming Kingdom of our Lord.

To attempt to find in the development of this great image, culminating in sudden and overwhelming destruction, that which symbolises the growth and progress of the kingdom of Christ as a moral and spiritual system from the time of His first advent until the Gospel is universally accepted, is extraordinary and astonishing.

The truth is that the vision of the image has no reference whatever to the Kingdom of Christ. It sets forth the rise, progress, and culmination of human power and government during the whole period, and prior to the establishment of the Kingdom of the Son of God upon earth.

The careful study of Daniel, chapters ii, vii, shews that the stone which falls upon the feet of the image, falls when the feet and toes are fully formed. The two feet, in my judgment, represent the eastern and western branches of the Roman earth. This, I believe, indicates that such a division will be in existence at the time when

the stone falls. The ten toes of the image, and the ten horns of the beast "dreadful and terrible," portrayed in chapter vii, and referred to as ten kings which shall arise, are no doubt identical.

The fact that when our Lord came at His first advent there were no ten kings or kingdoms in existence, is conclusive that the falling of the stone could not refer to His coming, or to any action on the part of the Lord at that time. Rome was an Imperial European power, and continued to be so for centuries afterwards. It is certain that the Roman earth has never yet been divided into ten kingdoms, five being found in the eastern, and five in the western parts of Europe.

Equally interesting is the fact that the past twenty-five years have witnessed a remarkable approximation to the conditions which existed when Rome was in the zenith of her power. Russia, Germany, Holland, Norway, Sweden, and Ireland never had part or place in the Roman earth. This fact is deeply interesting, in the light of the heated controversy concerning Home Rule and the dismemberment of the Empire. The geographical limits of Rome in her Imperial estate comprehended, on the eastern side, Syria, Turkey, Greece, Egypt, and Austria, including parts of Roumania, etc.; on the western side, England, including Scotland, Belgium, France, Spain, and Italy. It is a remarkable fact that, within so brief a period as twenty-five years, the kingdoms of Italy, Greece, and Egypt had no independent existence. Egypt is now practically a kingdom. The meaning of the word "Khedive," is "King." Italy and

Greece have been most unexpectedly restored; and whilst it is true that the Roman earth does not as yet present the area of Imperial Rome divided into ten kings or kingdoms, the approximation to the conditions which will exist when the stone falls (*i.e.*, when Christ comes) is very striking and full of significant interest, as a sign of the approach of the Great King. The Rhine provinces now possessed by Germany will probably revert to France, these being within the sway of Rome. It is strongly believed by many, and I share in that conviction, that whenever the stone falls upon the feet of the image, *i.e.*, whenever our Lord is suddenly revealed from heaven in flaming fire with the angels of His might, it will be to find the Roman earth substantially divided into the geographical limits which pertained in the first century. The remarkable approach to these conditions seen at the present time will not escape the attention of the reader. We, in our turn, may add: "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it." For the strong confidence of His people, our Lord has declared concerning the sudden overthrow of these nations: "And he shall rule them with a rod of iron (strength); as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father" (Rev. ii, 27).

Now these testimonies prove beyond all question the approach of "the great and the terrible day of the Lord," the supreme and stupendous crisis of His coming. Preaching to the Jews, Peter says: "Repent ye therefore, and

be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord ; and he (God) shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you : whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (ACTS iii, 19-21).

Let it be borne in mind that this promised sending of Jesus Christ the second time was made after the ascension, and subsequent to Pentecost. How striking the words : "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things." What times are these ? The times of the investiture of Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords over the whole earth.

That the kings of the earth will dispute His right has been shewn. That our Lord will dash in pieces their power, yields the precise equivalent of the arrival of the morning of the restitution of all things (ACTS iii, 21, R.V.). I am aware that these words have been used to maintain the view that the Lord will not return to the earth until the final end of all things, or, as some have put it, until "time shall be no longer." I venture to say that, now the translation of this passage is correctly given (R.V.), we shall not hear this verse misquoted, as it has so often been. The meaning is, "DELAY shall be no longer."

The sands in the hour-glass are quickly running out. He comes. He comes to reign. Restoration without the Restorer ; righteousness without the Righteous One. the kingdom without the King ; the power and the glory without the personal embodiment of Him who is the

power, the wisdom, and the glory of God—I am free to confess I cannot understand it.

Can anyone carefully read the Word of God, and fail to see how wondrously God has exalted the personality of His blessed Son: "the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person, who upholds all things by the word of his power?" Though personality may be beset with difficulty as applied to our Lord, it is one of the grandest factors both in human apprehension and experience.

"Absence of personality" is not a remarkable quality. The mighty God accentuates all this in Him in whom it hath "pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell"—that blessed One He hath appointed heir of all things. It is to the Son that He saith: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; and let all the angels of God worship him."

May we not appeal, as Paul did, in regard to the great doctrine of the resurrection: "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" Why, brethren, should it be regarded as unreasonable, or unscriptural, that He whom the Holy Father once sent to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, should again be sent, in the exercise of the beneficent prowess, to restore the earth to the beauty and glory which attached thereto before sin entered and marred His fair and blessed handiwork? Is He not competent? Is He not able to save to the uttermost? Surely, in deepest sympathy with the closing utterances of the Scriptures of truth, we also may add: "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE COMING REVOLUTION.

DOCTOR PUSEY ON LONDON.

"Wealthy, busy, restless, intellectual, degraded London. Sender forth of missionaries, but, save in China, the largest heathen city in the world. Converter of the isles of the sea, but thyself unconverted; fullest of riches and of misery, of civilisation and of savage life, of refinement and debasement.

"Heart, whose pulses are felt in every continent, but thyself diseased and feeble, wilt thou, in this thy day, anticipate by thy conversion the day of the Lord, or will it come upon thee as hath never been the like nor shall be? Shalt thou win thy lost ones to Christ, or be thyself the birth-place or abode of Antichrist?"

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold :
" Peace on the earth, good-will to men,
From heaven's all-gracious King ;"
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

* * * * * *

Yet with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long,
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong ;
And man at war with man hears not,
The love-song which they bring—
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing.

And while, beneath life's crushing load,
With forms oft bending low,
We toil along the climbing way
With weary steps and slow,
Look up : for lo, the peaceful years
Come swiftly on the wing,
Of which, to patient faith and hope,
The blessed angels sing.

The promised time is hastening on,
By prophet-bards foretold,
When with the ever-circling years
Comes round the age of gold :
When peace shall over all the earth
Its undimmed splendours fling,
And the whole world send back the song
Which now the angels sing.

E. H. Sears.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE COMING REVOLUTION.

THE statements of the preceding chapter suggest another objection. It is asked: When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with the angels of His might, in flaming fire taking vengeance upon them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel, what becomes of human life—and what is the subsequent condition of the earth? Writing concerning this great crisis, the prophet ISAIAH says: "For behold! the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots, like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire; for by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be many" (ISA. lxvi, 15, 16).

Observe the use of the word *many*. It is not a total destruction, neither the extinction of human life throughout the earth, which is spoken of. It is the breaking up

of the strongholds of human wickedness, the pulling down with power of the corrupt governmental forces which prevent righteousness and truth from having free course in the earth. Who can look upon the authority which now exists without seeing, not only that it should be overthrown, but that it is essential to the welfare of the world? Whether Russia, Austria, Germany, England, Turkey, or the United States be considered, not one of these nations is worthy the possession of authority, if righteousness, honour, and truth be taken as the object for which government should exist. If good government comprehends the health and wealth of the people, commercial honesty, sobriety, goodness, and peace, then have these nations proved themselves utterly unworthy and incompetent to bear "rule, authority, and power."

It has often been affirmed that what we need is a revolution. Undoubtedly this is the fact. Moreover, that revolution is nigh at hand. It is not, however, the loosing of the tyranny of monarchs, nor the wild and surging passions of the mob, that we need; but it is the universal overturning which the righteous Author of authority will effect when He comes. Knowing, as I, alas, conclusively do know, the corrupt and immoral character of a large number of our princes, nobles, statesmen, and legislators, a revolution such as that revealed in the Scriptures quoted, would certainly prove a fitting and timely deliverance, so far as our own country is concerned.

The efficiency of that revolution, in order to break up existing governmental conditions, may be determined by the following graphic statement. The tremendous

convulsions described shew how terribly judicial judgments will have place. Its discriminating character also finds clear and vivid illustration: "Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt . . . . Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger" (ISAIAH xiii, 6, 7, 9-13). "Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof . . . . The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and FEW MEN left

. . . . Fear and the pit and the snare are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth" (ISAIAH xxiv, 1, 4-6, 17).

Beside this testimony, we observe that the Lord comes, in promised grace and mercy, to many amongst his people Israel and Judah (ZECH. xii, 10). He appears also for the deliverance of the heathen nations from the oppressive and shameful wrongs to which they have been subjected by the nations of Christendom. These nations by their very title (Christ's *dom*, or kingdom) profess to represent His government. The professing Church in Christendom has left the heathen world to perish. The nations also have not only consented to this, but they have counted the heathen in every part of the earth a legitimate and easy prey for their covetousness, rapacity, and wicked ambitions. The Coming King has yet to be heard concerning the conduct of the superior races (?). His part in the discussion of "the survival of the fittest" is yet to be taken. Our Lord will startle "men of light and leading" by such utterances as these: "For that which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God" (LUKE xvi, 15).

In this important discussion we need to take into account the purpose of God in reference to the existence and continuance of the world. This is very clearly revealed. "Thus saith the Lord: the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool" (ISA. lxvi, 1). "But, as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" (NUMB. xiv, 21). Again: "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (HAB. ii, 14). Our Lord also:

"Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth, even as it is in heaven (MATT. vi, 10). This result the prophet David describes as secured by our Lord; "and blessed be his glorious name, for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory" (Ps. lxxii, 19). Such will be the condition when the Lord shall be the "great King over all the earth" (Ps. xlvii, 2). "For of him, and through and to him, are all things: to him be the glory, for ever, Amen" (ROM. xi, 36). Men are daring to shut out of view the fundamental truth contained in the answer to the great question: what is the chief end of man? The chief end of man is "to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever." Will any reader have the temerity to affirm that human history up to date has secured these results? To me the thought of *fourteen hundred millions* of the human family being born into the world three times each century, is perfectly appalling, if the governmental conditions of the earth are to be as corrupt and incompetent in the future as they have been in the past. Thank God, we know that the end of human rule and authority is at hand. We hear with intelligent and joyous expectancy the great words of the Holy Father concerning His beloved Son: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness, therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (HEB. i, 8, 9).

Nor this only; for in view of the Lord's sovereignty over the whole earth, the blessed God said to the ADONAI, the Son (Ps. ii, 8) says: "Ask of me, and I shall give thee

the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Here, indeed, we are face to face with the GOOD TIME COMING. The heathen nations shall no longer be a prey to the dastardly passions and unholy greed of a godless civilisation. Does my reader notice the remarkable character of the words: "thou *lovest* righteousness, and *hatest* wickedness"?—the positive on both sides, be it observed. Why, a king after this type found in this corrupt age, would, within twelve months, bring against himself the combined forces of the world. Such a character, even as an individual, is contemptuously spoken of by men of the world as "a religious cant," or as "goody-goody." This is the world's derisive phrase for a righteous and godly man.

The earth is not the property of man. It is the possession of the living God. Human life on the earth is not man's freehold in perpetuity. The life of man is the possession and property of the Eternal God. With the intention and purpose of the blessed God before us, we are bound to ask: What has been the influence and the result in regard to the purposes of God,—so far as Christendom is concerned? Has the issue been to fill the earth with His knowledge and glory? Has the professing Church carried the truth of God and His salvation to the nations who for centuries have been sitting in heathen darkness? What is the answer which China, India, and Africa give to this enquiry? What is the testimony given by eleven hundred millions of the human family who are still sitting in darkness, and who have not even heard of Jesus Christ our Lord?

It is a solemn fact that, for every heathen which our Western Christianity has been the means of bringing to Christ, at least fifty have been cursed and blasted by our Western civilisation and commerce. Who can think of the hundreds of thousands of the earth's sable sons who have been demoralised and slain by the inhuman slavery carried on by our fathers, or the brandy, rum, and opium fiends which English commerce has taken amongst them, without recognising the truth of this tremendous indictment? Surely, no darker chapter has ever been written than that which is written in the chronicles of God concerning the utter failure of the English nation to carry out the purposes of God. The nations comprehended in Christendom have been, and are forwarding the *interests of hell* wholesale. Concerning the heathen nations, it may be said that the superior races have stolen their lands, plundered their property, degraded their men and women, diminished even to extinction some of their races, and sacrificed to lust, drunkenness, and death millions of their people. However guilty other nations have been, to England must be awarded the palm in this respect. Through her armies, navies, civil service, and commercial intercourse, the curses of licentiousness, drunkenness, blasphemy, opium poisoning, and abominable ungodliness have held, and are holding, high carnival.

Not only so, but she has done this side by side with a proud and arrogant presentation of superiority of race and breed. Well may we ask: "O England, England, exalted to heaven with privilege, doth it become thee thus to debase thyself, to become the destroyer of thy fellows?

Was it for this thy God so greatly honoured thee? Has thy day also come to be thrust down to the lowest hell?

It is evident that the great centre for the desolating judgments which we have quoted from the prophetic Scriptures, will come upon the earth in the closing days of this age. The area comprehended is within the map of Europe, including Great Britain, Egypt, and Syria, reaching eastward to the Euphratean valley. The judgments of God are full of discrimination. There will be no haste or maladminstration of power in the great day of the Lord. The divine vengeance will make no mistake.

It is remarkable to notice that, surrounding the very site where the Tower of Babel was erected, the ancient Babylon once stood. Though desolate for centuries and now almost unknown, there can be little question that Babylon will again be rebuilt and become a prominent centre of the earth's Eastern commerce. She will be spoken of as the glory of the earth's commercial greatness, and will in the judgment of God become the stronghold of every wickedness. Her sins will reach to heaven, and God will remember her iniquities. "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine, and she shall be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord who judgeth her" (Rev. xviii, 5-8).

Thus the ancient site of defiant ungodliness, the centre from which every form of spiritual wickedness went out to deceive men to the ends of the earth, shall know the strong and fearful judgment of the mighty God. Here, in very deed, shall be seen the awfulness of the law of heredity

in relation to sin and iniquity. Desolating and world-wide earthquake convulsions, together with consuming fire from heaven, shall spread terror and dismay amongst all men. God's judgments will make short work of Babylon's boasted magnificence, commercial greatness, and vast wealth.

Let the reader carefully ponder the whole of the eighteenth chapter of REVELATION, where the living God gives His clear, solemn testimony concerning these things. I have little doubt that many will see, as Dr. Chalmers saw, in the Babylon of REV. xviii, a striking picture of London. It is not London; God distinctly says it is Babylon. That point is settled.

Let us remember, however, that the terrible judgment of God which will utterly overthrow Babylon, will at the same time also overthrow all such cities as London, Paris, and Berlin. These are the words of the living God: "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air, and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great City was divided into three parts, and THE CITIES OF THE NATIONS FELL! and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath; and every island fled away, and the mountains were not found" (REV. xvi, 17-20).

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